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Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Robert C. Weaver papers

1869-1970 [bulk 1923-1970]

Sc Micro R-3701

Processed by Susan Sharlin.

Summary

Creator: Weaver, Robert C. (Robert Clifton), 1907-1997

Title: Robert C. Weaver papers

Date: 1869-1970 [bulk 1923-1970]

Source: Presented by Robert Clifton Weaver, 1970 and 1971. SCM76-2

Abstract: The Robert Clifton Weaver Papers primarily concern Weaver's professional activities and development from his entry into government service in 1933 to 1961. Material prior to 1933 relates to the Weaver family.

Access: Advance notice required.

Alternative Form Available: Collection available on microfilm.; New York Public Library

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Language of the Material: English

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Creator History

Robert Clifton Weaver, the first black presidential cabinet officer, served as the first Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development under President Lyndon Baines Johnson. However, this represented only one of a series of important posts in federal, state and municipal governments as well as private foundations, organizations and universities held by Weaver during his long and illustrious career. As economist, public administrator, educator and author, Weaver devoted himself to the multifaceted issues of minority labor and urban problems. In 1933, Weaver was one of a number of young men drawn to Washington by the New Deal administration, where he received a succession of assignments as adviser on minority problems to various agency administrators. He soon became the leader of "The Black Cabinet" whose efforts resulted in increased participation by and benefit to

minority groups in the numerous projects and programs sponsored by the government during this period. His associates in this group included Ralph Bunche (United Nations Undersecretary General), U.S. Court of Appeals Judge William H. Hastie and N.A.A.C.P. Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins. While in the federal service, Weaver also supervised the National Survey of Negro White Collar and Skilled Workers sponsored by the Department of the Interior and served as a consultant both to the T.V.A. and to President Franklin Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Education. After World War II, Weaver left the federal government to teach and write on the problems of urban living. His research resulted in numerous articles as well as the following monographs: *Negro Labor*(1946), *The Negro Ghetto*(1948), and *The Urban Complex*(1964). In 1961, Weaver returned to Washington when President Kennedy appointed him Director of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, which later became the Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D.). There Weaver tried to stimulate a more aesthetic environment in public housing and to improve relocation policies by increasing funds available to small businessmen displaced by urban renewal. He ensured that the Housing Act of 1961 included grants for recreational and scenic areas and pushed through the controversial Section 221d3, giving non-profit corporations cut-rate mortgage loans to provide housing for displaced families of low and moderate income. Weaver was born and raised in Washington, D.C. His father, Mortimer Grover Weaver was a U.S. postal clerk. Weaver's maternal grandfather, Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman, the first black in the United States to earn a doctoral degree in dentistry, graduated from Harvard's dental school with its first class in 1869. Both Weaver and his brother, Mortimer, attended Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C. where Weaver had his own electrical business during his senior year. Mortimer Weaver, who graduated from Williams College and Harvard University, was an assistant professor of English at Howard University at the time of his death in 1929 at the age of twenty-three. Robert Weaver was a Distinguished Professor of Urban Affairs and Director of Urban Research Center at Hunter College. He was also a member of the New York City's Municipal Assistance Corporation, the Rent Stabilization Board, and the Conciliation and Appeals Board of New York City, and has received numerous citations and honorary degrees. For more detailed information on Weaver's life and career, see Chronology.

Chronology

1907, Dec 29 Born in Washington, D.C. to Mortimer Grover Weaver and Florence E. Freeman Weaver.
1929 Graduated with a B.S. cum laude from Harvard College where he won the Pasteur Medal and Boylston Speaking Prize.

1931 Received an M.A. in economics from Harvard University.

1931-1932 Taught economics at the Agricultural and Technical College, Greensboro, North Carolina.

1932-1933 Doctoral student and Austin Scholar at Harvard University.

1933-1934, Nov Associate Adviser on Negro Affairs, Department of the Interior under Clark Foreman.

1934 Received Ph.D. in economics from Harvard with a thesis entitled *The High Wage of Prosperity*.

1934-1938 Adviser on Negro Affairs, Department of the Interior under Secretary Harold L. Ickes and Consultant to the Housing Division of the Public Works Administration.

1935, July Married Ella V. Haith, who had graduated from the Drama Department, Carnegie Institute of Technology before receiving an M.A. from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in Speech.

1938-1940 Special Assistant in charge of race relations to Nathan Straus, Administrator of the U.S. Housing Authority.

1940-1942 Administrative Assistant to the Labor Division, National Defense Advisory Commission under Sidney Hillman.

1942 Chief, Negro Employment and Training Branch, Labor Division, Office of Production Management.

1942-1943 Chief, Negro Employment and Training Branch, Labor Division, War Production Board.

1943-1944 Chief, Negro Manpower Service, War Manpower Commission.

1944-1945 Executive Director, Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, Chicago.

1945-1948 Director, Community Services Division, and later Consultant to the American Council on Race Relations, where he was concerned with intergroup understanding and developing programs and techniques and determining causes for tension in employment, housing, education, law enforcement

and community organization.

1946, Mar-Aug Supply Officer and Acting Deputy Chief, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration's Mission to the Ukraine.

1946 Publication of *Negro Labor*.

1947, Summer Visiting Professor of Economics, Teachers College, Columbia University.

1947-1948 Lecturer in Economics, Northwestern University.

1948 Publication of *The Negro Ghetto*.

1948-1951 Visiting Professor, School of Education, New York University.

1949, Summer Professor of Economics, New School for Social Research, Summer Session in Europe.

1949-1951 Member of the Fellowship Committee, Julius Rosenwald Fund.

1949-1955 Director, Opportunity Fellowships, John Hay Whitney Foundation.

1950-1955 Chairman, National Committee against Discrimination in Housing.

1952-1954 Member, National Selection Committee, Fulbright Fellowships.

1952-1956 Member, Board of Directors, Health and Welfare Council of New York City.

1953-1955 Member of the Advisory Committee on Urban Renewal, U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency.

1955 Deputy Commissioner of Housing, New York State.

1955-1959 New York State Rent Administrator. The first black to serve in the New York State Cabinet, Weaver advanced a four point program: 1) decreasing the demand among non-whites for middle-income housing in the center of cities. 2) removing the attraction of racial homogeneity from the suburbs. 3) reducing the snob appeal of racial exclusiveness. 4) preventing "tipping" (overbalance) in any open neighborhood.

1955-1959 Member, Executive Committee of the Commission on Education, New York Board of Education.

1955-1959 Vice-Chairman, National Board, N.A.A.C.P.

1959-1960 Chairman, National Board, N.A.A.C.P.

1959, Sept-1960, Oct Consultant to the Public Affairs Program, Ford Foundation.

1960, June-Dec Vice-Chairman, New York City Housing and Redevelopment Board.

1961-1966 Administrator, U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency.

ca.1963 Death of Weaver's adopted son, Robert C. Weaver, Jr.

1964 Publication of *The Urban Complex*.

1966-1968 Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

1966-1969 Member, Board of Trustees, Antioch College.

1969-1970 President, Baruch College, City University of New York.

1970-1971 Professor of Economics, City University of New York.

1971- Distinguished Professor of Urban Affairs, Hunter College.

1973 Chairman, Mayor Abraham Beame's Housing and Land Use Task Force.

1974-1975 Chairman, Governor Hugh Carey's Task Force on Housing.

Scope and Content Note

The Robert Clifton Weaver Papers, 1869, 1923-1970, document the varied career of a major figure in the field of urban affairs. The collection primarily concerns Weaver's professional activities and development from his entry into the federal service in 1933 until his return to the government under the Kennedy administration in 1961. Material prior to 1933 relates largely to the Weaver family. The documentation of Weaver's years as administrator of the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is less complete than that for the earlier period. The collection itself has been arranged in the following series: *PERSONAL FILE, CORRESPONDENCE, WRITINGS AND SPEECHES, PRINTED MATERIAL, PHOTOGRAPHS, SCRAPBOOKS AND*

ALBUMS, and HONORARY DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES.

Arrangement: Collection organized into seven series; I. Personal File; II. Correspondence; III. Writings and speeches; IV. Printed Material; V. Photographs; VI. Scrapbooks and Albums; and VII. Honorary Degrees and certificates

Key Terms

Subjects

African American government executives
African Americans -- Economic conditions
Housing -- Law and legislation -- United States
Housing -- United States
Housing policy -- United States
Minorities -- United States
Public officers
Slums -- United States
Urban renewal -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Diaries
Scrapbooks

Geographic Names

United States -- Economic conditions
United States -- Social conditions

Names

Weaver, Robert C. (Robert Clifton), 1907-1997
Bethune, Mary McLeod, 1875-1955
Bunche, Ralph J. (Ralph Johnson), 1904-1971
Davis, John P. (John Preston), 1905-1973
Freeman, Robert Tanner
Galbraith, John Kennedy, 1908-
Galbraith, John Kenneth, 1908-2006
Hastie, William, 1904-1976
Hill, T. Arnold
Horne, Frank S., 1899-1974
McEntire, Davis
Moon, Henry Lee, 1901-1985
Moron, Alonzo Graseano, 1909-
Motley, Constance Baker, 1921-2005
Reddick, Lawrence Dunbar, 1910-1995
White, Walter, 1893-1955
Woodson, Carter Godwin, 1875-1950
United States. Department of Housing and Urban Development
United States. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

Container List

b. 1 f. 1 r. 1 **PERSONAL FILE 1869, 1925-1959**

The *PERSONAL FILE*, 1869, 1925-1959, contains a wide variety of material on Weaver and various members of his family, arranged in chronological order. Included in this folder are Weaver's resume [1959?], his federal government service rating notices, selective service reclassification notices and book contracts as well as transcripts and recommendations for his brother, Mortimer Grover Weaver. Of particular interest is the 1869 diary of Weaver's grandfather, Robert T. Freeman, the first black in the United States to earn a doctoral degree in dentistry.

CORRESPONDENCE

CORRESPONDENCE, 1933-1960, consists of a single sequence of incoming and outgoing letters arranged alphabetically by correspondent's last name, with certain exceptions. Copies of letters neither to nor from Weaver are filed by the author's name, unless they are enclosures, in which case they have been retained with their covering letters. Within each name, the letters are filed chronologically. Memoranda and press releases of the Democratic Advisory Committee have been included with the correspondence. The letters are substantive, describing policy development and program implementation in great detail. Weaver's letters elaborate his theories on urban development as well as the effects of economic legislation on minority groups, i.e., the Baker-Metcalf Law of 1955 prohibiting discrimination in housing built or altered with the aid of government insured mortgage loans (see Finletter, Thomas K.). Extensive correspondence with Walter White, Executive Secretary of the N.A.A.C.P. elaborates N.A.A.C.P. policy on specific issues. There is also a series of letters between Weaver and his publisher, Harcourt, Brace and Company (see Davis, Lambert). Weaver corresponded with a wide range of notable figures in the government and other related fields including Mary McLeod Bethune, Ralph Bunche, John P. Davis, John Kenneth Galbraith, William H. Hastie, T. Arnold Hill, Frank Horne, Davis McEntire, Henry Lee Moon, Alonzo Moron, Constance Baker Motley, Lawrence D. Reddick, Walter White and Carter G. Woodson. Although the correspondence represents a business file, Weaver maintained personal friendships with many of these individuals, which is evident in the letters.

- b. 1 f. 2 r. 1 A
- b. 1 f. 3 r. 1 B
- b. 1 f. 4 r. 1 C
- b. 1 f. 5 r. 1 D
- b. 1 f. 6 r. 1 E-F
- b. 1 f. 7 r. 1 G
- b. 1 f. 8 r. 1 Hackett-Horne 1948
- b. 1 f. 9 r. 1 Horne, Hunt 1950-
- b. 1 f. 10 r. 1 I-J
- b. 1 f. 11 r. 1 K-L
- b. 2 f. 1 r. 1 McDougald-McGraw
- b. 2 f. 2 r. 1 Mackel-Moon
- b. 2 f. 3 r. 1 Moron-Myer
- b. 2 f. 4 r. 2 N-P
- b. 2 f. 5 r. 2 Q-R
- b. 2 f. 6 r. 2 S
- b. 2 f. 7 r. 2 Tanneyhill-Wheeler
White, Walter
- b. 2 f. 8 r. 2 1933-1940
- b. 2 f. 9 r. 2 1941-1954
- b. 2 f. 10 r. 2 Whitney-Y

b. 3 WRITINGS AND SPEECHES

An extensive series of *WRITINGS AND SPEECHES*, 1925, 1933-1970, n.d., has been divided into two files; those by Weaver and those by other authors. Weaver's writings and speeches include reprints of his articles as well as typescript drafts, ranging from scholarly articles and commencement addresses to official reports. These writings have been arranged in a chronological sequence followed by a typescript draft of *The Negro Ghetto*.

- b. 3 f. 1 r. 2 Robert Weaver
- b. 3 f. 2 r. 2 1933-1949
- b. 3 f. 3 r. 2 1950-1951
- b. 3 f. 4 r. 2 1955
- b. 3 f. 5 r. 2 1956-1957
- 1958-1963, 1970, n.d
- The Negro Ghetto
- b. 3 f. 6 r. 3 Preface, Contents, pages 1-39
- b. 3 f. 7 r. 3 pages 40-130
- b. 3 f. 8 r. 3 pages 131-220
- b. 3 f. 9 r. 3 pages 221-300
- b. 4 f. 1 r. 3 pages 301-390
- b. 4 f. 2 r. 3 pages 391-454, Index

Other Authors

Writings and Speeches by Other Authors are arranged alphabetically by the author's name and include articles by John Kenneth Galbraith, Henry Lee Moon and Walter White. Of particular note is a 1951 article entitled *The Crusading Spirit of Robert C. Weaver* by Robert L. Gill. *The Puritan Tradition* written in 1925 by Mortimer Grover Weaver is also included in this file.

- b. 4 f. 3 r. 3 A-F
- b. 4 f. 4 r. 3 G-L
- b. 4 f. 5 r. 3 M-R
- b. 4 f. 6 r. 3 S-W, [unknown]

PRINTED MATERIAL

PRINTED MATERIAL, 1923-1968, consists of programs, transcripts, housing reports, memoranda, bulletins and newspaper clippings on such topics as housing, urban development and slum clearance. Some of the organizations represented in this series include the American Federation of Labor, Slum Clearance Advisory Committee, Democratic Advisory Council and the Conference on the Scope and Powers of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice. A number of commencement and conference programs from black educational institutions and associations can also be found in this series. The Newspaper Clippings relate largely to Weaver. The Printed Material is arranged in chronological order with the Newspaper Clippings following in a separate chronological sequence.

- b. 4 f. 7 r. 3 1923-1939
- b. 4 f. 8 r. 3 1940-1949
- b. 4 f. 9 r. 3 1950-1953
- b. 5 f. 1 r. 4 1954-1955
- b. 5 f. 2 r. 4 1956-1957
- b. 5 f. 3 r. 4 1958-1968
- b. 5 f. 4 r. 4 Newspaper Clippings 1930, Apr-1958, Nov

PHOTOGRAPHS

The PHOTOGRAPHS, 1953-1970 mainly concern particular events in which Weaver participated, ranging from college commencement exercises to visits to housing projects in the United States and Puerto Rico. The Photographs have been arranged in chronological order.

- b. 6 f. 1 r. 4 Defense Department Orientation 1953
- b. 6 f. 2 r. 4 1958
- b. 6 f. 3 r. 4 Signing of Housing Act 1961
- b. 6 f. 4 r. 4 Rutgers University
Commencement 1963, June 9
- b. 6 f. 5 r. 4 Weaver and John F. Kennedy ca. 1963
- b. 6 f. 6 r. 4 University of Pennsylvania
Commencement 1966, May 23
- b. 6 f. 7 r. 4 Dedication of ILGWU
Cooperative Homes, Penn Center, New York 1966, Nov
- b. 6 f. 8 r. 4 Cornerstone laying and construction of new H.U.D. building ca. 1967
- b. 6 f. 9 r. 4 University of Michigan
Commencement 1968, Apr 7
- b. 6 f. 10 r. 4 Puerto Rico 1968
- b. 6 f. 11 r. 4 1966-1968
- b. 6 f. 12 r. 4 Yeshiva University
Commencement 1970, June 8
- b. 6 f. 13 r. 4 Press conference with women reporters n.d.
- b. 6 f. 14 r. 4 Waldorf Astoria dinner n.d.
- b. 6 f. 15 r. 4 Miscellaneous n.d.

SCRAPBOOKS AND ALBUMS

SCRAPBOOKS AND ALBUMS, 1925-1963, mainly concern particular events in which Weaver participated, ranging from college commencement exercises to visits to housing projects in the United States and Puerto Rico. The scrapbooks also contain newspaper clippings and memorabilia relating to Weaver's family, and the albums include printed material connected to the specific event covered in the album. The creation of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the erection of the Department's new building are most fully documented in this series. The Scrapbooks and Albums have been arranged in chronological order, although material within individual scrapbooks and albums often ranges widely in date.

- b. 7 f. 1 r. 5 Family Scrapbook 1925-1938
- b. 7 f. 2 r. 5 Harvard Class Album 1929
- b. 8 f. 3 r. 5 Miscellaneous photographs 1937-1962
- b. 8 f. 4 r. 5 Photographs, correspondence and press release largely concerning Weaver as New York State Rent Administrator 1938, 1954-1959
- b. 8 f. 5 r. 5 Photographs of French apartment houses, Societe Centrale Immobiliere de la Caisse des Depots (Les Mureaux, Vernouillet, Chevilly-Larue) ca. 1960
- b. 8 f. 6 r. 5 Photographs, correspondence and clippings from reception in honor of Weaver's appointment as head of the Housing and Home Finance Agency given by the Metropolitan Builders Association of Greater Milwaukee 1961, Jan 30

SCRAPBOOKS AND ALBUMS (cont.)

Harvard Class Album (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 7 r. 5 Photographs and clippings concerning Weaver's visit to Puerto Rico 1961, April 19-21
- b. 9 f. 8 r. 5 Photographs of Weaver with various dignitaries concerning speeches, conferences and groundbreaking ceremonies, Hartford, Connecticut and Washington, D.C. 1961-1964, n.d.
- b. 9 f. 9 r. 5 Photographs of Robert and Ella Weaver and Weaver's confirmation hearings as Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency 1961-1964, n.d.
- b. 10 f. 10 r. 5 Photographs of Weaver at press conferences and dedications, Hartford, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and Puerto Rico 1963, n.d.
- b. 10 f. 11 r. 5 Scrapbook of clippings on Weaver, largely from Puerto Rican newspapers, compiled by Eliseo G. Font, Regional Administrator, Housing and Home Finance Agency 1963, Jan 14-18
- b. 10 f. 12 r. 5 Photographs, clippings, correspondence, program commemorating Weaver as Elmira College, New York, commencement speaker and recipient of honorary degree 1963, June
- b. 11 f. 13 r. 5 Photographs of Weaver, Lyndon Baines Johnson, and others, receiving awards, giving speeches, signing bills 1963-1968
- b. 11 f. 14 r. 5 Photographs, correspondence and printed material related to the history of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department's new building 1965-1968
- b. 12 f. 15 r. 5 Photographs and clippings concerning Weaver's visit to Norfolk, Virginia 1967, Mar 20
- b. 12 f. 16 r. 5 Photographs and programs from commencement exercises at Pace College, New York, where Weaver received honorary degree 1967, June 11
- b. 12 f. 17 r. 5 Miscellaneous photographs of Weaver and others n.d.

HONORARY DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES

HONORARY DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES, 1925, 1927, 1950-1970, consists mainly of diplomas from honorary degrees conferred on Weaver by colleges and universities, arranged alphabetically by the name of the institution. Occasionally citations lauding Weaver's accomplishments are included with the diplomas. In addition, certificates from various civic and municipal organizations, praising Weaver's contributions to the field of housing and urban affairs are included, arranged chronologically following the honorary degrees. Mortimer Weaver's diplomas from Williams College and Harvard University can also be found in this series.

Robert Weaver

Degrees

- b. 13 Agricultural Mechanical and Normal College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas-Delaware State College
- b. 14 Detroit, University of-Pace College
- b. 15 Pennsylvania, University of-Yeshiva University
- b. 15 Certificates 1950-1968
- b. 15 Mortimer Weaver
- b. 15 Degrees-Harvard University and Williams College