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CLARENCE CAMERON WHITE

Papers

1901-1940

The New York Public Library

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture
515 Malcolm X Boulevard
New York, New York 10037

Preface

This inventory is one of several prepared as a part of the archival preservation program at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, a branch of The New York Public Library.

The Schomburg Center's archival preservation program involves the organization and preservation of primary source material held by the Center and of significance to the study of the Black experience. It furthermore includes the preparation of detailed inventories of these records, making the information contained therein accessible as well as available to scholars.

The necessary staff and supplies for this program were made available through a combination of Library, National Endowment for the Humanities grant, and State of New York grant funds.

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CLARENCE CAMERON WHITE (1880-1960). PAPERS, 1901-1940.
13 boxes; available also on 10 reels microfilm.

Biography

Clarence Cameron White, black violinist, composer, and teacher, was born on August 10, 1880 in Clarkesville, Tennessee to James William and Jennie White (later Jennie Conner). White grew up in Oberlin, Ohio and Washington, D.C., where he attended Howard University. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory at Oberlin College in 1903, White went to Washington, D.C. to become director of the String Department of the newly formed Washington Conservatory of Music. He married Beatrice Louise Warrick, a pianist, on December 31, 1904; they had two sons, William and Clarence.

For the next forty years, White continued to teach, study, perform, and compose. From 1908 to 1910 he lived in London, studying violin with the Russian violinist, Michael Zacharewitsch, and composition with the black English composer, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. While living in England, he also served as first violinist in the String Player's Club of Croyden, conducted by Coleridge-Taylor. After returning from England in 1910, White moved to Boston where he opened a private violin studio. He remained there until 1922 when over-exhaustion caused him to spend a year recuperating in Oberlin.

In 1924, White was named head of the Music Department of West Virginia State College, Institute, West Virginia. He held that post until 1930 when a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation enabled him to spend two years in Paris. There he studied under the French composer, Raoul Laparra, and worked on his Haitian opera, "Ouanga"! for which he won the 1932 David Bispham Medal, awarded annually by the American Opera Society of Chicago for the best operatic work by an American.

"Ouanga"!, meaning "voodoo charm" or "voodoo spell," is based on the violent life of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the slave who led his people in revolt and became Emperor of Haiti in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The libretto for "Ouanga"! was written by John Frederick Matheus, Professor of Romance Languages at West Virginia State College. White and Matheus had gone to Haiti during the summer of 1928 to study native music and folklore. Their collaboration resulted also in "Tambour" (1929), a two-act play with incidental music by White and "Cocomacague," an early version of "Ouanga"!

In 1932, White became director of the School of Music at Hampton Institute in Virginia, a position he held until around 1934. From 1937 to 1942, he travelled around the country, organizing community music groups for the National Recreation Association.

Beatrice White died in the early 1940's. In 1943, White married Pura Belpré, children's author and librarian with The New York Public Library. From then until his death on 2 July 1960, White

Biography

lived in New York City. For a short time he continued to give concerts and teach violin. He later retired to devote full time to composition.

During his career, White composed a great variety of music. Many of his compositions, including "Bandanna Sketches," were based on black spirituals. He also wrote a number of classical pieces, such as a violin concerto in E minor and a symphony in D minor for cello and piano. A nine and one-half minute musical selection entitled "Elegy," written in 1954, won the 1953-1954 Benjamin Award for Tranquil Music. A later composition, "Heritage," consisted of a cantata set to the poetry of Countee Cullen.

White's work was published largely by the Carl Fischer Company and was played by many musicians of note, such as Fritz Kreisler and Albert Spaulding. White received several other awards and honorary degrees, including the Harmon Foundation Medal and Award for distinguished service to music (1927), an honorary Master of Arts degree from Atlanta University (1929), and an honorary Doctor of Music degree from Wilberforce University (1933).

Scope and Content

The Clarence Cameron White Papers, 1901-1940, n.d., consist of biographical information, correspondence, contracts, financial records, programs, newspaper clippings, other printed material, manuscript music, other writings, and photographs, documenting the first thirty years of White's career as composer, violinist, and teacher. These years represent a very fruitful portion of White's life, during which he received his musical training and wrote a great many of his compositions.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION, 1906-[c1938], ranges from official documents to autobiographical sketches, handwritten by his first wife. Included are his son, William's, birth certificate and college grades, a fragmentary scrapbook for the Hampton Institute School of Music and brochures advertising White as a violinist and composer.

CORRESPONDENCE, 1901-1940, n.d., is divided into two chronological series of incoming and outgoing letters. The majority of the letters were written to White by family, friends and business associates. Regular correspondents included his mother, son, and Ona Talbot and Myra Reynolds Richards in Paris. Richards was a sculptress whose bust of White appears in the photographs in the collection. Letters to Beatrice Warrick White from her father, Thomas Warrick, are also included in this series. It should be noted that a number of incoming dunning letters were discarded before the collection was acquired by the Schomburg Center. For

Scope and Content

further information on significant correspondents, see the partial index following the Container List.

Outgoing Correspondence consists of one folder of typewritten letters and handwritten drafts of letters. This correspondence is almost entirely business related and provides considerable insight into White's attitudes towards his career.

CONTRACTS, 1918-1934, relate largely to White's association with Carl Fisher, Inc., music publishers, and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (AMSAC).

FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1919-1933, consist almost entirely of correspondence and charts detailing royalty payments to White from Carl Fisher, Inc. and Theodore Presser Co. The royalty account records list the names of the songs, number of copies sold, number of exempt and free copies, stock on hand, price, and royalty due.

PRINTED MATERIAL includes programs, miscellaneous printed material, and newspaper clippings. The Programs file, 1907-[1938], n.d., is divided into two chronological sequences; programs for White's own performances and performances of his works by others, and programs relating to other artists. The Programs are almost entirely musical in nature, and range from individual recitals to commencement exercises at Hampton Institute. Some programs are autographed by White or other artists. Several programs for Jules Bledsoe are included in the file.

Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1911-1937, n.d., is a folder of books, pamphlets, and articles such as a book on keyboard training and harmony (1917), articles on the Hampton Institute choir (post 1932), and a quarterly bulletin of the Songwriter's Protective Agency (1934).

The Newspaper Clippings, 1905-1936, n.d., come from a variety of mostly American newspapers, and cover notices of musical events, reviews of performances, and articles sent to White for personal interest. Included with the clippings are several broadsides advertising individual performers and containing excerpts from newspaper reviews.

WRITINGS, 1905-1935, include lessons and examinations from Hampton Institute, articles and speeches by White, articles and papers by other authors, and manuscript music. The lessons are numbered consecutively and deal with the history of black music. White's articles and speeches are mostly undated and relate to black music in general and specific compositions such as "Bandanna Sketches" in particular. Articles and Speeches by Other Authors consists mostly of papers written by White's students for his classes at Hampton Institute. Included also in this file is an article from the

Scope and Content

"Indianapolis Sunday Star" on sculptress Myra Reynolds Richards. Manuscript Music (1905-1939) represents over half the Clarence Cameron White Papers, and has been divided into files on "Ouanga"!, "Cocomacaque," and Miscellaneous Music. Although most of this music is handwritten, a number of printed compositions have been included in this series. Printed items are noted as such on the Container List. The Manuscript Music is largely undated.

Material on "Ouanga" is arranged by type (vocal score, full score, sketches, libretto) and then by the individual item. Entire versions or sections of the opera are in chronological order or consecutive order by act, while miscellaneous sketches are in alphabetical order. "Ouanga" underwent several revisions, from "Cocomacaque" to "Ounga" to "Ouanga"!

Miscellaneous Music consists of an extensive file of compositions, mostly written or arranged by White and organized in an alphabetical sequence. When another composer was indicated, the name was included in parentheses after the title of the piece. Occasionally other titles were found on the back of individual items. These compositions are indicated on the Container List by the use of [and] before each additional title. (i.e. In that great gettin'-up morning [and] Ride on, Jesus). These compositions range from spirituals to classical pieces for voice, string quartet, and full orchestra.

PHOTOGRAPHS are arranged under the following headings: Clarence Cameron White, Individual Men, Individual Women, Children, Group Portraits, and Places. Most of the photographs are not captioned or identified, and very few have dates. Of particular note is a photograph of Ira Aldridge as Othello (1930). None of the photographs have been microfilmed. In 1980 the photographs were transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division.

PROVENANCE

The Clarence Cameron White Papers were purchased from Anne Luber, Irvington, New Jersey, on 14 September 1976. SCM76-1.

Processed by S. Sharlin/D. Carter
2 March 1977

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Reel</u>	
1	1	1	BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION CORRESPONDENCE Incoming Correspondence
	2		1901, Spring-1920
	3		1921, Jan-1929
	4		1930
	5		1931
	6		1932
2	1	2	1933, Jan-May
	2		1933, Jun-Dec
	3		1934-1940
	4		n.d.
	5		Outgoing Correspondence, 1924, Jun- 1935, Jul
	6		CONTRACTS, 1918, Apr 8-1934, Jul 6
	7		FINANCIAL RECORDS, 1919, Dec 31-1933, Jun 27
			PRINTED MATERIAL
			Programs
	8		White, 1907, Apr-1935, Mar
			Other Artists
	9		1905, Dec-1930, Nov
	10		1931, May-[1932]
3	1	3	1933
	2		1934
	3		1935, Feb-1938
	4		n.d.
	5		Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1911-1937, May, n.d.
			Newspaper Clippings
	6		1905, Oct-1936, Feb, n.d.
	7		n.d.
4	1	4	WRITINGS
			Lessons and Examinations (Hampton Institute), 1933-1935
	2		Articles and Speeches (White), [c1920]-[ante 1928], n.d.
	3		Articles and Papers (Other Authors), 1929-1933, n.d.

Container List

Box Folder Reel

WRITINGS

Manuscript Music

"Ouanga"!

Vocal Score

5	1		Holograph pencil, 1932
	2		Black line print, 1930-1932 (Paris, France)
	3		Black line print, 1932 (Hampton Institute)
	4		Revised copy, 1934
	5		"Ounga"!, n.d.
			Full Score
	6		Act I, n.d.
	7		Act I, Scene 1, n.d.

6	1	5	"Ounga"! - Act II, n.d.
	2		"Ouanga"! - Act II, n.d.
	3		"Ounga"! - Act III, Scenes 1 and 2, n.d.

Sketches

	4		Act I
	5		Act II
	6		Act III
	7		Act IV

7	1		Ah! Haiti All day long have I caressed you in my dreams
	2		Ballade Ballet Black Haiti
	3		Congo dance Coronation march
	4		Defilées trenody The drums are driving us apart
	5		Entr'Act
	6		Hail Dessalines I weep A king is not afraid March March of the populace Memories
	7		Méringue O memories On to the cap
	8		Overture
	9		Prelude
	10		Principal themes

Container List

Box Folder Reel

WRITINGS

"Ouanga"!

11 Prologue
12 Prologue
13 Sing to me again

Miscellaneous Sketches

8 1 6 n.d.
 2 n.d.
 3 n.d.
 4 n.d.
 5 n.d.
 6 n.d.
 7 n.d.
 8 n.d.

Libretto

9 1 7 1931, Paris [2 copies, carbon]
 2 1938 [printed]
 3 Bound holograph, n.d.
 4 Incomplete, n.d.
 5 Fragments, n.d.
 6 "Cocomacaque"
 Vocal Score, n.d. [incomplete]
 7 Sketches
 Ah Haiti
 All day long have I caressed you in
 my thoughts
 All hail! great Dessalines
 8 Coronation march
 Defilées song
 Defilées trenody
 9 Hail Dessalines
 Haitian drum rhythms
 I am the aftermath
 10 Prelude
 11 Prologue
 12 Sing to me again
 13 Miscellaneous Sketches
 14 Libretto

Miscellaneous Music

10 1 8 Acadian boat song
 Admonition
 African love song
 Air
 Album leaf, 1920, Nov (Edward H.
 Margetson)

Container List

Box Folder Reel

WRITINGS

			Miscellaneous Music
10	2	8	Antar, 1922
	3		At eventide
			Aubade
			Auld lang syne, concert transcription of
			Ave verum corpus (Mozart)
			Awake beloveds (W.H.A. Moore)
	4		Bandanna sketches, 1916 [partly printed]
	5		Ballade, 1923
			Ballet, 1933
			Barcarolle (Boat song), 1905, Apr 20
	6		Bear de burden
	7		Blow Gabriel
			By and by
			By the cabin door
	8		Cabin song, 1920
			Calvary
			Can I ride [and] I want Jesus to walk with me
			Canakin clink [and] King Stephen [and] Song to Desdemona
			Capriccetto
			Castellano
			Certn'y Lord
			Chanson triste
	9		Chant
			Chant Nègre, 1915
			Characteristic waltz No. 3
	10		Childhood days
			Chloe's croon
			Chloe's song
			Children of the sun, 1924
			Chorus
			'Couragement
			Cradle song (Hush, ma honey)
	11		Dame nature
			Dance caprice
			Dance orientale
	12		Dawn
			Dear heart
			De blin' man
			Dirge
	13		Don't you let nobody turn you around

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Reel</u>	
			WRITINGS
			Miscellaneous Music
10	13	8	Down by the riverside [and] Down by de riber side
			Dr. Bunyan
			Drinking song
	14		Ear training notebook (Beatrice L. White)
	15		Easter song ("Prince of Jerusalem")
			Emperor Doo
			Emperor of America
			Emperor's song
			Ethiopia
			Ev'ry time I feel the spirit [and] I heard of a city called heaven
			Ezekiel saw the wheel
			Fantasia stücke
	16		Forty Negro spirituals [printed]
	17		Forget-me-not waltz
			For unto us a child is born
			Four miniatures for string orchestra
			Fulfilment
	18		Genuine voodoo song
			Give-away-Jordan
			Go down, Moses
			Goin' to shout all over God's heaven
			Great day
			Gwine to roll in my Jesus' arms
11	1		Hail to Ra
			Have you heard the news?
			Hear the good news
			A heart's wish
			The high school
			Homing
			How long de train been gone?
			Hush, mah honey [printed]
			Hymn to the night
	2		I got a home in that rock
			I heard of a city called heaven
			I'll be your chaperone
			I lofed a fellow in old Berlin
			I'm a child of grace
	3		Improvisation, 1918 [partly printed]
	4		I'm so glad troubles don't last always
			In spite of it all

Container List

Box Folder Reel

WRITINGS

			Miscellaneous Music
11	4		In that great gettin'-up morning [and] Ride on, Jesus In the dreamy bye and bye In the heart of a rose I saw de light
	5		Isle of never It's a secret It's me, O Lord I want to be ready
	6	9	Jesus sittin' on de waterside Joshua fit de battle [printed] Kashmira, 1918 [partly printed]
	7		Lament Levee dance Lit'le David, play on yo' harp Look away
	8		Lord hear me praying Lord I want two wings Love's arrow Lullaby
	9		Mammy's li'l boy Many thousand gone March triumphal
	10		Melodie in F, 1910, Jun Mêranque Mêringue Mood Motett [and] Praise ye the Lord Mountain corillions, 1926, Apr 21 Musique Nègre [printed] "My lady" waltzes [and] Duncce octette My Lord, what a mornin! My soul is a witness The mystic jade, march of the priests The mystic jade, orientale dance, 1916
	12		Negro chant, 1915 Negro dance Negro folk suite for orchestra
	13		Negro lament, 1916 Negro melodies, string quartet
	14		Negro pageant, prelude to a, 1921, Dec
	15		Negro rhapsodie, 1918 Never ask me, 1912, Mar

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Reel</u>	
			WRITINGS
			Miscellaneous Music
11	15	9	New spirituals for Sunday evening services at Hampton Institute [and] Joshua at Jericho [printed]
	16		Nocturne Old-time religion [and] I got a robe Oh, what a beautiful city On the bayou Overtones Overture, 1923-1924
	17		Pantomime
	18		Pastel Pearl of my life The pearl of the Antilles Peter on the sea Peter go ring dem bells La petite ballade
	19		Petite sérénade Pilgrim song
	20		Plantation song Poor little Jesus Poor me A prayer Prelude
12	1		Quartett sketch, 1920 Reflections Remembrance Rhapsodie Nègre
	2		Rhapsody ("Libya") Ride on Jesus Romance in F Rose song Roses
	3		Sailors dance Scherzo Serenade Scotch idyll Sinner, please don't let this harvest pass Six pieces for cello with pianoforte accompaniment, based on Afro-American folk songs
	4		Sketch for orchestra

Container List

Box Folder Reel

WRITINGS

			Miscellaneous Music
12	4	9	Slave Song
			Slumber song
			Somebody knockin' at yo' door
			Sometimes I feel like a motherless chile
			Sometimes song, 1939
			Somewhere around a throne Song
			Songs of labour of the American Negro
	5		Spirituals
	6		Springtime
			Steal away
			String quartet (suite) in C minor based on Negro folk tunes, Opus 29
			String quartet written for the Berkshire competition (Phemius)
			String quartett (based on Negro folk tunes) in C minor, Opus 20, 1920
			String quartett sketch
	7		Suite (based on Negro folk tunes) in C minor, 1920
			Suite for violin and pianoforte
			Suite in C minor for 1st violin, 2nd violin, viola, and cello, 1920
			Sweet thoughts for yesterday
			Sweetest little fellow (that God ever made), 1920 (R.M. Coleman)
			Swing low, sweet chariot
	8	10	Tambour meringue
			There's a man goin' roun' taking names
			Time to be modern
			Tokio
			Trio sketch
	9		Trouble will bury me down, 1923
			Tuxedo
			Twilight [and] Valse coquette
			Two miniatures for pianoforte, 1921, Jan
			Two Negro melodies for baritone
			Two Negro spirituals
			Two songs for Shakespeare's Othello, 1926
	10		Unless

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Reel</u>	
			WRITINGS
			Miscellaneous Music
12	10	10	Valse coquette
			Verse
			Viking song (S. Coleridge-Taylor)
			[printed]
			Vocal selections
	11		Waitin' for the trumpet to sound
			Wake up! Jacob
			Walk together, children [and] Lord,
			hear me praying
			Walk with me
			Waltz song
			Waltz-theme
			Way over in de primis' land
			We are climbing Jacob's ladder
			Wedding hymn
	12		We're taxed to death
			Were you there?
			When we were two
			The willow song
			W.V.C.I march [West Virginia
			Collegiate Institute]
			"Yes" song
			Zal
			Miscellaneous Sketches
13	1		n.d.
	2		n.d.
	3		n.d.
	4		n.d.
	5		n.d.
	6		n.d.
	7		n.d.
	8		Miscellaneous Libretto

SIGNIFICANT CORRESPONDENTS (partial index)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>
Aldridge, [Amanda] Ira	1918, Oct 6 1925, Jul 10 1927, Apr 18 1928, Feb 14 1928, Jul 16 1933, Oct 10 n.d. [2]
Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel	1905, Dec 8 1908, Dec 3 [postmark] 1909, Feb 9 1909, Feb 11 1909, March [?] 22
Johnson, James Weldon	1931 [?], Apr 25
Peabody, George Foster	1928, Jul 16 1933, Apr 25 1933, Oct 10
Reid Taylor, A.W.	1933, Jan 28 [telegram] 1933, Dec 9 [enclosure in 1934, Jan 7, Talbot to White]
Tanner, Henry O.	1932, Nov 26 1933, Mar 6 1933, May 16 1933, Nov 1
Stokowski, Leopold	1933, Mar 8 (not filmed)

MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHIVES AND RARE BOOKS DIVISION

SEPARATION RECORD

The following items were removed from:

Name of Collection/Papers Clarence Cameron White

Accession Number SCM76-1

Purchased: From Anne Luber

Date received: September 1976

Date transferred: 1980

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

Schomburg Library:

Graham, Shirley. BOOKER T. WASHINGTON (Messner, 1955). Rogers,
J.A. SEX AND RACE (Rogers Publications, 1940). Shaw, George
Bernard. THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLACK GIRL IN HER SEARCH FOR GOD
(Dodd, Mead, 1933). Ward, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. A LOST HERO
(Little, Brown, 1891). Work, John Wesley. FOLK SONG OF THE
AMERICAN NEGRO (Fisk University Press, 1915).

Schomburg Art and Artifacts Division:

Two woodcuts for "Ouanqa"!

Photographic plate (Harry T. Burleigh)

Two prints Haitian scenes

Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:

1 box of photographs

Other:

One folder miscellaneous music catalogs given to Chief of
Schomburg Center on 5 January 1977.
