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.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Content</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provenance</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container List</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Information</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Records</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed Material</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant Correspondents</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation Record</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 "Cocomacque," 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 Belpre, 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.


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
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## Container List

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### WRITINGS

#### Manuscript Music

- **"Ouanga"!**
  - **Vocal Score**
    - Holograph pencil, 1932
    - Black line print, 1930-1932 (Paris, France)
    - Black line print, 1932 (Hampton Institute)
    - Revised copy, 1934
    - "Ounga"!, n.d.
  - **Full Score**
    - Act I, n.d.
    - Act I, Scene 1, n.d.

- **"Ounga"! - Act II, n.d.**
- **"Ounga"! - Act II, n.d.**
- **"Ounga"! - Act III, Scenes 1 and 2, n.d.**

#### Sketches

- Act I
- Act II
- Act III
- Act IV

#### Other Works

- Ah! Haiti
  - All day long have I caressed you in my dreams
- Ballade
- Ballet
- Black Haiti
- Congo dance
- Coronation march
- Defilées trenody
- The drums are driving us apart
- Entr'Act
- Hail Dessalines
- I weep
- A king is not afraid
- March
- March of the populace
- Memories
- Méringue
- O memories
- On to the cap
- Overture
- Prelude
- Principal themes
## Container List

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<th>Folder</th>
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### WRITINGS

"Ouanga"

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### Miscellaneous Sketches

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"Cocomacaque"

| 6   | Vocal Score, n.d. [incomplete] | |

### Sketches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
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<td>All day long have I caressed you in my thoughts</td>
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<td>All hail! great Dessalines</td>
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<td>Hail Dessalines</td>
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<td>Haitian drum rhythms</td>
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### Miscellaneous Music

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<td>Air</td>
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### Writings

**Miscellaneous Music**

- *Antar*, 1922
- *At eventide*
- *Aubade*
- *Auld lang syne, concert transcription of Ave verum corpus* (Mozart)
- *Awake beloveds* (W.H.A. Moore)
- *Bandanna sketches, 1916* [partly printed]
- *Ballade, 1923*
- *Ballet, 1933*
- *Barcarolle (Boat song), 1905, Apr 20*
- *Bear de burden*
- *Blow Gabriel*
- *By and by*
- *By the cabin door*
- *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*
- *Chant*
- *Chant Nègre, 1915*
- *Characteristic waltz No. 3*
- *Childhood days*
- *Chloe's croon*
- *Chloe's song*
- *Children of the sun, 1924*
- *Chorus*
- *'Couragement*
- *Cradle song (Hush, ma honey)*
- *Dame nature*
- *Dance caprice*
- *Dance orientale*
- *Dawn*
- *Dear heart*
- *De blin' man*
- *Dirge*
- *Don't you let nobody turn you around*
### Container List

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**WRITINGS**

**Miscellaneous Music**

- Down by the riverside [and] Down by the river side
- Dr. Bunyan
- Drinking song
- Ear training notebook (Beatrice L. White)
- 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
- Fantasie stücke
- Forty Negro spirituals [printed]
- Forget-me-not waltz
- For unto us a child is born
- Four miniatures for string orchestra
- Fulfilment
- 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

- 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
- 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
- Improvisation, 1918 [partly printed]
- I'm so glad troubles don't last always
- In spite of it all
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**WRITINGS**

**Miscellaneous Music**

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  
Jesus sittin' on de waterside  
Joshua fit de battle [printed]  
Kashmira, 1918 [partly printed]  

7  
Lament  
Levee dance  
Lit'l 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  
Mérangue  
Méringue  
Mood  
Motett [and] Praise ye the Lord  
Mountain corillions, 1926, Apr 21  

11  
Musique Nègre [printed]  
"My lady" waltzes [and] Dunce 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
WRITINGS

Miscellaneous Music

New spirituals for Sunday evening services at Hampton Institute
(and) Joshua at Jericho
(printed)

Nocturne

Old-time religion [and] I got a robe

Oh, what a beautiful city

On the bayou

Overtones

Overture, 1923-1924

Pantomime

Pastel

Pearl of my life

The pearl of the Antilles

Peter on the sea

Peter go ring dem bells

La petite ballade

Petite sérénade

Pilgrim song

Plantation song

Poor little Jesus

Poor me

A prayer

Prelude

Quartett sketch, 1920

Reflections

Remembrance

Rhapsodie Nègre

Rhapsody ("Libya")

Ride on Jesus

Romance in F

Rose song

Roses

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

Sketch for orchestra
## Container List

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## WRITINGS

### Miscellaneous Music
- Slave Song
- Slumber song
- Somebody knockin' at yo' door
- Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
- Sometimes song, 1939
- Somewhere around a throne
- Song
- Songs of labour of the American Negro

### Spirituals
- 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

### Suite
- 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

### Other Works
- Tambour meringue
- There's a man goin' roun' taking names
- Time to be modern
- Tokio
- Trio sketch
- 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
- Unless
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WRITINGS

Miscellaneous Music

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Valse coquette
Verse
Viking song (S. Coleridge-Taylor) [printed]
Vocal selections

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

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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

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Miscellaneous Libretto
SIGNIFICANT CORRESPONDENTS (partial index)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel</td>
<td>1905, Dec 8 1908, Dec 3 [postmark] 1909, Feb 9 1909, Feb 11 1909, March [?] 22</td>
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<td>Johnson, James Weldon</td>
<td>1931 [?], Apr 25</td>
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<td>Peabody, George Foster</td>
<td>1928, Jul 16 1933, Apr 25 1933, Oct 10</td>
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<td>Reid Taylor, A.W.</td>
<td>1933, Jan 28 [telegram] 1933, Dec 9 [enclosure in 1934, Jan 7, Talbot to White]</td>
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<td>Tanner, Henry O.</td>
<td>1932, Nov 26 1933, Mar 6 1933, May 16 1933, Nov 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stokowski, Leopold</td>
<td>1933, Mar 8 (not filmed)</td>
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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:**


**Schomburg Art and Artifacts Division:**

Two woodcuts for "Ouanga!"

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.