

MG
443

ANDREW J. CHAMBERS PAPERS

The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research
in Black Culture
515 Lenox Avenue
New York, New York, 10037

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHY..... 1
SCOPE AND CONTENT..... 2
CONTAINER LIST..... 3

CHAMBERS, ANDREW J. PAPERS, 1874-1899.
½ archive box, .2 linear feet.

Biography

The Reverend Andrew J. Chambers was a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church who sought to advance the cause of African Americans, including those within his denomination and in the United States generally. According to Alexander W. Wayman, an early church historian of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Chambers was a member of the New England Conference, but was appointed by the Arkansas Conference as its agent in seeking to erect a monument to Richard Allen, the founder and first bishop of the A.M.E. Church. Wayman indicates that Chambers "succeeded in raising the money and the monument was erected on the Centennial grounds." (Wayman, Cyclopedia of African Methodism, [Baltimore: Methodist Episcopal Book Depository, 1882], p. 34). The Allen monument appears to have been located in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia in 1876, which would make the Centennial a celebration of American independence rather than an A.M.E. Church celebration. An 1876 letter indicates that in that year Chambers was acting as the "Corresponding Secretary" for an "Executive Committee" presumably for the Allen monument.

The Chambers papers show that in succeeding years Chambers was involved in trying to influence the Congress to form a Commission of "three colored men.... to enquire [sic] into the intellectual status of the colored people of the south, and what, if anything, the federal government can do for their advancement." It is not clear if Chambers was successful in this effort. Nor is it clear whether his efforts to influence the opinions of presidents, senators, and congressmen on matters of similar concern succeeded. Chambers, however, was awarded the A.M.E. Church's Medal of the Henry McNeil Turner Crusaders of the 20th Century in 1899.

Little of Chambers' activities on behalf of his own congregation or congregations is known. He appears to have had his own church in New Haven, Connecticut, for some time, and he may have led other congregations in North Carolina and Kentucky. The amount of time he seems to have spent travelling on behalf of the projects assigned to him by the A.M.E. Church provides a hint that he may not have had his own permanent pastorate after leaving New Haven, a surmise supported by the fact that Chambers' sought a scholarship to pursue further education as late as 1890. Chambers received correspondence in several cities where he may have had a residence, including New Haven, Salem, New Jersey (1881), Alleghany, Pennsylvania (1884), Wilmington, North Carolina (1886), New Berne, North Carolina (1888), and Danville, Kentucky (1898-1899).

Reverend Chambers' private life is similarly opaque, although a letter to "My Darling Angel" in New Haven seems to have been

received by the same person who sent Chambers a letter signed "L". "L" was likely Lettie Chambers, the recipient of an 1890 telegram also included in the papers, who was probably Chambers' wife.

Scope and Content Note

The Reverend Andrew J. Chambers Papers consist of two series: Correspondence and Printed Material. The first series contains correspondence received by Chambers which provides an account of his activities on behalf of the Richard Allen monument, his attempt to secure Congressional passage of a bill to establish a commission to study African American life, and other efforts. Additionally, the series contains loose scrapbook pages of documents gathered, presumably by Chambers, related to the Allen monument and in support of the Colored Commission effort. There are also testimonials from several prominent African Americans, including Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnett, and a petition signed by Mifflin W. Gibbs, H. H. Garnett, Robert Brown Elliott, John Mercer Langston, William Grant Still, Henry McNeal Turner, and James T. Rapier on behalf of the Allen monument.

Provenance

Received from Mari Evans, August 1991.
SCM 91-66.

Michael R. West / Diana Lachatanere
August 1991

Container List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	1	CORRESPONDENCE
	2	1876-1877
	3	1880-1885
	4	1886-1889
	5	1890-1899
	6	Richard Allen Monument, 1874-1876
		Colored Commission Bill, 1878-1881
		PRINTED MATERIAL
	7	Newspaper clippings
	8	Miscellaneous oversized material (in Flat File Drawer)

Notes on ANDREW J. CHAMBERS.

Ca. 1882: "Chambers, Andrew J., at present a member of the New England Conference, was appointed by the Arkansas Conference agent for the Allen Monument. He succeeded in raising the money and the monument was erected on the Centennial grounds."

--Alexander W. Wayman, **Cyclopedia of African Methodism**, (Baltimore: Methodist Episcopal Book Depository, 1882). Rare Books 287-W.

Addresses where Chamber received mail.

- 1881 Salem, New Jersey
- 1881 417 Orchard Street, New Haven, Conn.
- 1882 348 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C.
- 1882 417 Orchard Street, New Haven, Conn.
- 1884 Allegany, Penn.
- 1886 515 Campbell Street, Wilmington, North Carolina
- 1888 New Berne, North Carolina
- 1899 Danville, Ky.

Correspondence

1876

- May 22 John M. Langston letter of introduction for Chambers.
- September 18 J. G. Hartranft [?], exec. chamber, Penna. To C., Corresponding Secretary Executive Committee. Re: turning down invite to the unveiling of the monument in honor of "Emancipation and Enfranchisement."
- December 26 P. F. Lee, Wilberforce University. Re: The Allen Monument and the problem of "freighting the stone to the Jubilee."

1877

- November 18 Rep. [name unclear]. Re: Colored Commission bill.

1880

- February 9 To "Darling Angel" from C.
- April 29 John Maze, Killutagh House, Lurgan, Ireland. Proposing a correspondence with Chambers "about the colored question."
- April 29 John Maze letter, copied by Chambers with the notation, "Save this copy, Darling."

1881

- February 14 Sen. Blanche K. Bruce. Re: Bruce's feeling that the Senate is unlikely to look favorably on the Commission Bill during the current session.

July 14 Sen. ? Brown. Re: "Commission of three colored men to inquire into the material industry + intellectual status of the colored race + their needs, + what, if anything, the national government can do, for their amelioration and advancement." Correspondent indicates that he will consider support if it passes the House. "There is a very good understanding existing between the two races in my state + I think in the South generally...."

August 29 Representative of Barnum Richardson Co. of Lime Rock, Conn. Re: arranging a meeting with C.

November ? Rep. James Phelps indicating he will present a copy of "the bill" to the Congress.

November 26 Rep. Phelps. Re: arranging a meeting with C.

1882

January 25 Speaker of the House J. Warren Keifer. Re: Commission Bill.

February 14 Rep. James Phelps. Re: arrangements for C.'s appearance before the Committee on Education and Labor.

February 16 John F. Quarles. Re: support for Commission.

February 21 Rep. James Phelps. Re: arrangements for Chambers' appearance before the Committee on Education and Labor.

February 27 William Still. Re: Asking is "'A.J. Chambers,' a Colored or a White gentleman?" On back of letter is a undated note to "My Darling," probably to C. from his wife.

March 3 Rep. J.[?] Sherwin[?] Re: arranging a meeting.

March 4 Rep. Randall.

March 4 Sen. A.H. Garland [?].

March 7 J. S. Hinton. Re: his support for bill.

March 11 Sen. William Mahone[?]. Re: negative reply to an invitation to New Haven.

March 14 Richard Greener. Re: thanks for speech delivered before the House Committee on Education and Labor, and indicating Greener's support for the Commission Bill.

March 18 Rep. Phelps. Re: arranging a meeting.

March 22 William Still. Re: indicating Still's support for "the colored commission bill" and suggesting that petitions be gathered.

March 22	Jabez P. Campbell, Presiding Bishop of the 5th Episcopal District. Re: indicating his inability to visit C. in Conn.
March 28	Sam[?] Randall.
March 30	Blanche K. Bruce.
April 8	William Still. Re: invitation for C. to come to Philadelphia for a mass meeting in support of the Commission effort.
July 10	J.J. O'Connor. Re: indicating that Congress will not have time to consider the bill.
July 21	Sen. H.W. Blair. Re: indicating the difficulties of moving the Commission bill; suggests petitioning "and other manifestation of a feeling in favor of such a commission."
July 22	Sam[?] Randall. Re: acknowledgement of receipt of letter.
September 22	James E. English. Re: Donation of \$100 "in aid of the erection of the church on Spring Street."
1883	
September 20	T.C. Major [?], aide to the governor of Massachusetts. Re: turning down C.' invitation to New Haven.
1884	
January 5	Rep. [?] Mitchell. Re: Commission Bill.
February 16	Sam [?] Randall. Re: responding to C.'s letter congratulating him on his election.
February 22	Bishop H.M. Turner. Re: Commission bill and reactions to Turner's activities in northern newspapers.
December 20	F.C. Farr, secretary to the governor of Missouri. Re: Democratic rule in the South.
1885	
July 5	Secretary to Andrew Carnegie. Re: declining invitation and elaborating on Carnegie's position on the Ireland Question.
September 14	Unnamed secretary to the President of the United States. Re: requesting that C. set down his "views and recommendations" in writing for the President's consideration for his forthcoming message to Congress.

1886

January 30 Daniel S. Lamont, private secretary to the President. Re: acknowledgement of C.'s letter.

February ? ? Campbell, secretary to Mr. Parnell.

March 3 Daniel S. Lamont, private secretary to the President. Re: acknowledgement of C.'s letter.

October 26 D. Lamont, private secretary to the President, acknowledging C.'s letter.

December 17 [Name unclear] Mansion House, Dublin. Re: C.'s letter.

1887

Date unclear [Name unclear] Senate Chamber.

1888

February 13 Hugh J. Grant, commending Chambers' article on "England's Rule in Ireland," and instructing Chambers on applying for admission to the Tammany Society.

March 4 T. W. Talmer [?]. Re: acknowledgement of C.'s letter on "the Colored exposition bill."

March 14 Sen. John Sherwin advising C. of the necessity of his appearing before the Committee on Education and Labor.

March 14 Sen. [name unclear] acknowledging receipt of C.'s letter.

March 14 Sen. William Call [?] responding to C.'s commission proposal.

March 16 James Hassak [?], private secretary to Sen. Payne, acknowledging C.'s letter.

March 17 Rep. [name unclear]

March 18 Thos. M. Bowen.

March 26 Peter H. Clark, principal of the Alabama State Normal and Industrial School.

March 26 Sen. H.W. Blair.

March 30 Sen. H.W. Blair.

April 2 Rep. [name unclear]

May 7 Julian S. Carr, president of Blackwell's Durham Tobacco Co.

May 16 Carr.

1889

January 7 E.M. Halford [?], secretary to President-elect Benjamin Harrison, acknowledging receipt of C.'s letter.

January 25 same

February 7 same

May 8 E.M. Halford, private secretary to the President Harrison, acknowledging receipt of letter.

1889		
	June 22	same
	June 27	same
	August 30	same
	November 12	same
	November 13	same
1890		
	June 2	Telegram to Lettie Chambers, 117 Columbia St., from W.H. Chambers, 614 Laurel St., Louisville, Ky. Re: "Maggie is dead bury her/home wednesday morning"
	October 12	Mrs. Cleveland. Re: information for C. on a scholarship.
	November 12	E.M. Halford, private secretary to the President, acknowledging receipt of letter.
	November 15	same
	November 17	same
1892		
	August 19	President Benjamin Harrison, acknowledging receipt of C.'s letter offering advice for Harrison's letter of acceptance.
1897		
	March 15	Perkins, private secretary to Senator Mark A. Hanna, acknowledging receipt of letter.
	July 12	Charles Dick, Republican National Committee, acknowledging receipt of C.'s letter to Hanna.
1898		
	December 14	Porter, secretary to the President, acknowledging receipt of letter.
1899		
	April 26	Rev. H.B. Parks, Secretary. Home and Foreign Missionary Department of the AME Church, awarding C. the "Medal of the Henry McNeil Turner Crusaders of the 20th Century."
	August 17	John V. Farrell, indicating that the time is not opportune for Chambers' bill.