



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

Guide to the

Joel E. and Amy E. Spingarn papers

1898-1972

Sc MG 174

Summary

Creator: Spingarn, Joel Elias, 1875-1939

Title: Joel E. and Amy E. Spingarn papers

Date: 1898-1972

Size: 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift of Honor Trantum, September 1980.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: This collection consists largely of correspondence; included are letters from Joel E. Spingarn to Amy Spingarn written during the 1914-1915 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) speaking tour; letters to Amy Spingarn regarding researcher access to the Joel E. Spingarn collections at the Moorland Collection at Howard University and the James Weldon Johnson Collection at Yale University; and letters to W.E.B. Du Bois. Additional material includes information regarding the opening of Joel E. Spingarn High School in Washington, D.C.; a 1898 speech; NAACP printed material; articles by and about Arthur Spingarn, Joel's brother; a typescript by Jacques Roumain on Vodun (voodoo); and other printed material.

Preferred citation: [Item], Joel E. and Amy E. Spingarn papers, Sc MG 174, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Diana Lachatanere, 1980.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Creator History

Joel and Amy Spingarn were white philanthropists, humanitarians, and patrons of the arts.

Joel Spingarn also was a writer, literary critic, educator, and civil rights activist. After teaching comparative literature at Columbia University, he became active in literary and public affairs with the founding of the publishing firm of Harcourt, Brace and Company in 1919. His literary work includes *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1899), *Creative Criticism and Other Essays* (1931), and several books of poems. Spingarn also helped to found the National Association for the Advancement (NAACP) for which he served as chairman of the Board of Directors (1913–1919), treasurer (1919–1930), and president (1930–1939). The Spingarn Medal, which he endowed in 1913, is a gold medal awarded annually by the NAACP.

Amy Einstein Spingarn (1883-1980), born in New York City, was a philanthropist, poet, and artist known especially for her paintings of prominent African American cultural figures. Upon the death of her husband in 1939, Amy Spingarn was elected to finish out his term on the NAACP Board of Directors. She continued as a board member for nearly forty years.

Scope and Content Note

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Key Terms

Subjects

African American philanthropists
African Americans -- Civil rights
African Americans -- Societies, etc
Art patrons
Vodou

Names

Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963
Spingarn, Amy Einstein, 1883-1980
Spingarn, Arthur B. (Arthur Barnett), 1878-1971
Spingarn, Joel Elias, 1875-1939
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1 1902-1918
- b. 1 f. 2 Letters from Joel to Amy 1930s
- b. 1 f. 3 Letters to Amy 1928-1968
Includes letter from W. E. B. Du Bois.
- b. 1 f. 4 Letters from Joel to Amy about NAACP speech 1914-1915
- b. 1 f. 5 Letters regarding Joel Spingarn collections 1950-1972
- b. 1 f. 6 Writing
- b. 1 f. 7 Joel E. Spingarn High School, Washington, D.C 1953-1964

Printed matter

- b. 1 f. 8 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- b. 1 f. 9 General
- b. 1 f. 10 Roumain, Jacques. Vodun typescript
- b. 1 f. 11 Spingarn, Arthur (articles by and about)