



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

Guide to the

**Richard Parrish papers**

1950 - 1975

Sc Micro R-6688

Processed by C. Swank and S. Sharlin on 3 April 1978. This inventory was one of several prepared as a part of the archival preservation program. The necessary staff and supplies for this program were made available through a combination of funds and services provided by the Research Libraries, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the State of New York.

**Summary**

**Creator:** Parrish, Richard F. (Richard Franklin), 1914-1983

**Title:** Richard Parrish papers

**Date:** 1950 - 1975

**Size:** Microfilm; 3 reels

**Source:** Gift by Richard Parrish, 1976.

**Abstract:** The Richard Parrish Papers, 1950-1975, consist of correspondence, transcripts of speeches, minutes and convention proceedings, photographs, articles, newspaper clippings, and other printed material describing the activities of labor and civil rights organizations of which Parrish was an officer or member (primarily, the National Afro-American Labor Council). In addition, information about Parrish's teaching career is included.

**Conditions Governing Access:**

Researchers are restricted to microfilm copy.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Richard Parrish papers, Sc Micro R-6688, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

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**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the General Research and Reference Division: one carton of pamphlets, newspapers, newspaper clippings, and miscellaneous printed material (mostly duplicate material) for the vertical file.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: one folder of photographs.

### **Related Materials:**

Richard Parrish papers (Additions 1), 1959-1976 bulk (1966-1973), reels 4-10; Richard Parrish papers (Additions 2), 1932-1976, boxes 1-2.

### **Creator History**

Richard Franklin Parrish was a teacher and a labor leader in New York City. He was born on August 9, 1914, in Wildwood, New Jersey, and moved with his parents, Cora Elizabeth Flowers Parrish and Leslie Franklin Parrish, to New York City the following year. Graduating from high school during the Depression, Parrish worked as a clerk in the Navy Department and became active in labor organizations. Returning to school, he graduated from the City College of New York in 1947 with a degree in economics. Parrish taught in the New York City school system from 1947 until his retirement in 1976. He was a founding member and president of the National Afro-American Labor Council, formerly the Negro American Labor Council, which strove to end discrimination in the labor movement.

Parrish held offices in the United Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the national teachers union affiliated with the AFL-CIO. In 1963, Parrish led a contingent of teachers and students to Prince Edward County, Virginia where the local school board had closed the public schools rather than integrate. In 1964, the AFT expanded this Freedom School concept to include the Deep South. Parrish served as chairman of the union's Civil Rights Committee and acted as liaison between the schools and the national office. At the 1965 AFT convention, Parrish successfully concluded the fight for the ouster of segregated AFT locals. Parrish also chaired the AFT's 1966 conference on "Racism in Education." During the New York City teachers' strike of 1968, Parrish formed the UFT Black Caucus. In 1970, the AFT Black Caucus was established with Parrish serving as its chairman from 1970 to 1973. During the New York City teachers' strike of 1968, Parrish formed the UFT Black Caucus. Parrish was most active with teacher and black labor organizations from the early 1960s until 1974. In addition to his activities in civil rights and labor groups and work as a teacher, Parrish ran unsuccessfully for State Comptroller in 1949 and the New York City Council in 1963 on the Socialist Party ticket. He died in 1983.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection includes correspondence, speeches, minutes, convention proceedings, articles, printed material, and newspapers clippings describing activities of the labor and civil rights organizations to which Parrish belonged, together with information on his teaching career in public schools. The predominant organization represented in these papers is the National Afro-American Labor Council at the chapter and national levels; there are some papers for the American Federation of Teachers. Correspondents include Cleveland Robinson, president of the NALC. Also included are records of the National Afro-American Labor Council's National Executive Board such as minutes, correspondence, reports, membership records, financial records, subject files, press releases, and convention materials, 1960-1975. Some material of A. Philip Randolph and L. Joseph Overton, National Secretary of the NALC, is also included.

**Arrangement:** Papers organized into three series: I. Personal papers; II. National Afro-American Labor Council; and III. Other organizations.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American labor union members

African American teachers

African Americans -- Civil rights

Labor -- United States

Labor movement -- United States

Teachers' unions -- United States

Working class -- United States

### **Names**

Overton, L. Joseph

Parrish, Richard F. (Richard Franklin), 1914-1983

Randolph, A. Philip (Asa Philip), 1889-1979

Robinson, Cleveland L. (Cleveland Lowellyn), 1914-1995

American Federation of Teachers

National Afro-American Labor Council. National Executive Board

## Container List

### Personal papers 1950 - 1975

This series contains a limited amount of incoming personal correspondence; an article about Parrish and another by him; newspaper clippings concerning civil rights and labor issues, including specific information about the National Afro-American Labor Council and the United Federation of Teachers; and printed material and correspondence relating to Parrish's teaching career. Information within the folders is arranged chronologically. A 1950 letter from Constance Baker Motley to the N.Y. Teachers Guild on the Sweatt and McLaurin cases is included in the personal correspondence.

- r. 1 Personal correspondence 1950 - 1973
- r. 1 Professional files 1951 - 1975
- r. 1 Articles 1966 - 1969
- r. 1 Printed material 1952 - 1972
- r. 1 Newspaper clippings 1956 - 1975

### National Afro-American Labor Council (NALC) 1960 - 1975

This series has been divided into material on the national organization, 1960-1974, and files on individual chapters, 1962-1975.

National organization records include correspondence, the NALC constitution, executive board minutes, material on annual conventions and conferences, and mailing lists. The correspondence, arranged chronologically, contains many letters to and from Cleveland Robinson, president of the NALC. Folders for particular conventions and conferences include main addresses by Randolph and Robinson, resolutions, transcripts of the proceedings, and newspaper clippings. Financial information on the conventions and the economic conferences has been placed at the end of each folder. A notebook with financial data for the 1965 and 1968 conventions is located in the 1968 convention file.

The chapter files provide some information about the chapters' membership and activities. Information for the Baltimore and Chicago chapters is limited to one and two items respectively. The New York City brewery cases folder describes the New York chapter's efforts to end discrimination in the hiring and promotion practices of the brewery industry and union. The Westchester County file shows the NALC's involvement in improving the hiring practices at the Con Ed/Wedco Corporation Indian Point construction project.

#### National organizations

##### Correspondence

- r. 1 1964 - 1966
- r. 1 1967
- r. 1 1968
- r. 1 1969
- r. 1 1970
- r. 1 1971
- r. 1 1972 - 1974
- r. 1 Constitution 1960 - 1970
- r. 1 Executive Board minutes 1964 - 1972

##### Conventions and conferences

- r. 1 1961 - 1964
- r. 1 1965
- r. 1 1966
- r. 2 1967

National Afro-American Labor Council (NALC) (cont.)

National organizations (cont.)

Conventions and conferences (cont.)

- r. 2        1968  
            Includes correspondence, financial records, and newspaper clippings.
- r. 2        1970
- r. 2        1972  
            Includes correspondence, programs, and session transcripts.
- r. 2        Spring economic conference 1971 - 1972
- r. 2        Jobs/Now rally 1972
- r. 2        Mailing lists 1964 - 1970

Chapter files

- r. 2        Baltimore 1969
- r. 2        Chicago 1967 - 1969
- r. 2        Cleveland 1966 - 1970
- r. 2        Gary and Lake County, Indiana 1967 - 1968
- New York City
- r. 2        Correspondence and membership lists 1962 - 1975
- r. 2        Brewery cases 1956 - 1973
- r. 3        Philadelphia 1967 - 1969
- r. 3        Pittsburgh 1966 - 1972
- r. 3        St. Louis 1968 - 1972
- r. 3        Westchester County, NY 1968 - 1971
- r. 3        Youngstown 1966 - 1971

## Other organizations 1957 - 1975

This series includes substantial information about the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 1963-1975, and its New York City local, the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The AFT files highlight the issues besetting the union during the 1963-1975 period. The AFT Black Caucus file contains information about the group's support of Angela Davis as well as a history of the organization written by Parrish. The UFT folder contains documents concerning the 1968 teachers strike and one newspaper clipping about the Prince Edward County, Virginia Freedom School of 1963. The Civil Rights folder includes material relating to Freedom Schools in the Deep South, the "Racism in Education" conference of 1966, and the union's civil rights committee. Information within each folder is arranged chronologically.

Material in the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists folder, 1972-1974, describes the organization's founding and purpose, its support of McGovern for President, and its opposition to the nomination of Peter J. Brennan, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater N.Y., as Secretary of Labor. Documents include newspaper clippings, press releases, and articles.

The Community Teachers Association file, 1957-1966, contains material about its after-school tutorial program in 1964.

The JFK Library for Minorities folder, 1970-1973, describes the purpose of the organization and lists its 1973 officers and board members.

The National Education Association (NEA), 1973, records are limited to documents opposing the merger of NEA affiliates with AFT locals, and the constitution of the NEA's Official Black Caucus.

The Negro Labor Committee (NLC) file, 1968-1973, contains material about the Riverside Park housing project and the 1973 Frank R. Crosswaith scholarship award program. A brief biographical sketch of Crosswaith is included.

The United Black Caucus of Teachers folder, 1970-1973, includes statements of some of the positions taken by the organization.

The United Black Coalition for Jobs in the Construction Industry folder, 1968-1972, contains material about the Con Ed/Wedco Corporation's Indian Point construction project as well as membership lists. A speech by Cleveland Robinson during the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, and a transcript of testimony by Jesse Jackson, director of Operation Breadbasket, before the U.S. Department of Labor in 1969, are also included.

### American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

- r. 3 AFT Black Caucus 1966 - 1973
- r. 3 AFT Locals 1967 - 1973
- r. 3 United Action Caucus 1971 - 1972
- r. 3 United Federation of Teachers 1963 - 1974
- r. 3 Civil rights file 1964 - 1973
- r. 3 Printed material 1964 - 1973
- r. 3 Coalition of Black Trade Unionists 1972 - 1974
- r. 3 Community Teachers Association 1957 - 1966
- r. 3 JFK Library for Minorities 1970 - 1973
- r. 3 National Education Association 1973
- r. 3 Negro Labor Committee 1968 - 1973
- r. 3 United Black Caucus of Teachers 1970 - 1973
- r. 3 United Black Coalition for Jobs in the Construction Industry 1968 - 1972