



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

Guide to the

Berry family collection

1863-1918

Sc MG 483

Home to Harlem Project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Compiled by Karen Clark, 1993. Finding aid edited and adapted to digital form by Kay Menick in 2016.

Summary

Creator: Berry family

Title: Berry family collection

Date: 1863-1918

Size: 0.01 linear feet (1 folder)

Source: Donated by Marilyn Berry in 1992.

Revision History: This finding aid was updated by Allison Hughes.

Abstract: The Berry family collection consists of seven pieces of correspondence, apparently written by members of the Berry family, dating from 1863 to 1918, and spanning three states and Europe. There is also one typescript entitled "My Bit in the World War or the Story of 2921486." The correspondence begins with James Tate in West Point Georgia, although his wife and children appear to be in Mobile, Georgia, or Alabama. The other writers appear to be his wife, son, and nephew, although their relationship to Tate is not indicated. The documents cover important periods and topics in African-American history. James Tate's letter, written in 1863, expresses the anguish and difficulties African Americans faced with trying to establish and maintain a family while enslaved. A letter dated June 20, 1868 documents the role of a Black church as "post office;" the writer indicates mail for him and news for other people in town can be sent care of the church pastor. The letter from Olivia Tate dated July 28, 1887 describes her excitement at the possibility of a "Great Colored National Fair" in Georgia to exhibit the "arts, mechanics and productions of colored people throughout the union." Both of the letters written by Henry S. Berry during World War I, in 1918, tell of his experience in the Army's Medical Unit, 331st Labor Bureau. He expresses his pride in being a soldier and tells how the army built character. The autobiographical typescript, "My Bit in the World War, or the Story of 2921486," is twenty-five pages long and follows Berry, a member of the American Expeditionary Forces, from the receipt of the telegram calling him to duty to being one of fifty men chosen for the Army Medical Department, through war torn France. The typescript seems not to have been finished. Throughout this piece as well, is the theme of pride in being a good soldier.

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Language of the Material: English

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Key Terms

Subjects

African American families
African American soldiers
African Americans -- History -- 1863-1877
African Americans -- History -- 1877-1964
African Americans -- Social conditions -- To 1964
Black author
France. Armée -- African American troops -- History -- 20th century
Slaves -- United States -- Social conditions
United States. Army -- African American troops -- History -- 20th century
World War, 1914-1918 -- African Americans
World War, 1914-1918 -- Personal narratives, American

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Diaries
Letters (correspondence)

Names

Berry, Henry S.
Tate, James
Berry family