



The New York Public Library
Photographs and Prints Division. Schomburg Center for
Research in Black Culture

Guide to the

Lawrence D. Reddick photographs

1900s-1983

SCP 532782

Processed by Emily P. Dunne in 2022.

Summary

Creator: Reddick, Lawrence Dunbar, 1910-1995

Title: Lawrence D. Reddick photographs

Date: 1900s-1983

Size: 5.04 linear feet (13 boxes)

Source: A gift to the New York Public library by Ella Ruth Reddick in 1998; transferred to the Prints and Photographs division in 2021.

Abstract: Lawrence Dunbar Reddick (March 3, 1910 – August 2, 1995) was a professor, historian, biographer of Martin Luther King, Jr., and former curator of the New York Public Library's Schomburg Collection. Reddick was a scholar in the field of African American Studies and collected materials related to the Black experience in the military, education, and professional environments. Reddick's collection contains photographs and negatives used in his research, as well as images illustrating his academic career, civil rights advocacy, and personal life.

Preferred citation: Lawrence D. Reddick photographs, Photographs and Prints Division. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Processed by Emily P. Dunne in 2022.

Separated Materials:

Photographs transferred from Lawrence D. Reddick papers in Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books, Schomburg Center.

Creator History

Allison Hughes originally wrote this note for the Lawrence Reddick papers finding aid, published in 2021. Emily P. Dunne made some additions and changes in 2022.

Lawrence Dunbar Reddick (1910-1995) was a historian and writer who documented the United States Civil Rights Movement and was a pioneer in the field of African American studies.

Born and raised in Jacksonville, Florida, Reddick attended Fisk University where he studied history under Charles S. Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, and Horace Mann Bond. He earned his Ph.D. in history at the University of Chicago, writing a dissertation on "The Negro in the New Orleans Press, 1850-1860: A Study in Attitudes and Propaganda." In 1938 he married Ella Ruth Thomas, a New Orleans native, social worker, and teacher whom Reddick met while they were both pursuing graduate work at the University of Chicago.

During the 1930s, Reddick taught at Kentucky State College and Dillard University, and headed a Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA) project to collect slave narratives (which later continued under the auspices of the WPA Federal Writers Project). After the death of Arthur (Arturo) Schomburg in 1938, Reddick became the second curator of the Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library (NYPL). During World War II, he spearheaded a project to gather letters and other materials from Black soldiers to document their experiences in the war. While in New York during the 1940s, he also lectured at City College and the New School. In 1948, Reddick resigned from his position at NYPL following a dispute with the Library over what Reddick felt was a lack of funds necessary to properly oversee the Schomburg Collection. He then served as a history professor and chief librarian at Atlanta University, a position he held from 1948-1955; he then moved to Alabama State College, where he became chairman of the history department.

In the mid-1950s, while teaching at Alabama State College, Reddick became involved with the Montgomery bus boycott, and chronicled events of the protest for *Dissent* magazine. During this time, Reddick met and befriended Martin Luther King, Jr., then pastor at Dexter Avenue Church and president of the Montgomery Improvement Association. In 1959, Reddick wrote the first biography of King, *Crusader Without Violence*. That same year, he accompanied Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King on a month-long trip to India to meet with Indian officials and Gandhian activists. In 1964, Reddick again joined King on the trip to Oslo, Norway, when he received the Nobel Peace Prize. Reddick also became involved in the Southern Christian Leadership Council, serving on the board and various committees from its formation through the 1980s. Reddick saw his role as the official historian of the Civil Rights Movement, and in that capacity collected materials, conducted interviews, and took copious notes, in addition to his published writings on the topic.

Due to his participation in the Civil Rights Movement, Reddick was fired from his position at Alabama State College in 1960 at the request of Governor John Patterson, who accused him of being a Communist sympathizer. He found a position at Coppin State College in Baltimore, Maryland, where he taught for seven years. During this time, Reddick was involved with Project Y-003: To Improve Teachers for Inner-City Schools. The project aimed to educate and train teachers to work with students with culturally disadvantaged backgrounds in the Baltimore Public School system. Reddick's findings were ultimately published as a report to the United States Office of Education in 1967, and included a proposal to adopt the program nationally.

After working in Baltimore, Reddick took a break from academia to serve as director of the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) Institute, a Philadelphia-based adult education and job training program started by Leon Sullivan. In 1967, Reddick began teaching at Temple University in Philadelphia, soon joining the newly-created Afro-Asian Institute to teach classes in Black history. Reddick's time at Temple was marked by turbulence, and he often clashed with the history department and university administration. In 1976, Reddick authored a report alleging discriminatory hiring practices at Temple, leading to the formation of two investigatory committees.

Throughout his academic career, Reddick continued to expand the field of Black history, giving frequent lectures at academic conferences and participating on numerous committees devoted to developing African-American studies curricula and advocating for the inclusion of Black history in academia and cultural institutions. In the early 1970s, he joined the Kinte Library Project, an effort spearheaded by Alex Haley to study Black genealogy through archival research and oral history, producing a book-length report on the "Search for the Black Family in America." From 1977-1978, Reddick taught at Harvard as a visiting professor of African-American studies; while there, he embarked on a research project to study the institution's history of Black students and faculty. A few years later, in the early 1980s, he received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to study the history of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

In 1978, Reddick moved to New Orleans to take a position as professor of African American history at Dillard University, which he held until his retirement in 1987. He remained in New Orleans until his death on August 2, 1995.

Scope and Content Note

The Lawrence D. Reddick photographs, dating from the 1900s to 1983, contains photographs and negatives that chronicle Reddick's academic work, research, work on Martin Luther King Jr.'s biography, involvement in the American Civil Rights Movement, and his personal life. The collection is arranged into Personal photographs; Professional photographs; images of civil rights activities; and images used in Reddick's writing projects.

Several personal photographs are present, including headshots of Reddick, snapshots of his family, images of a 1968 trip to Hawaii, and other assorted family pictures.

The photographs in the Professional grouping primarily cover Reddick's academic career, including graduation photographs, some images of his tenure as curator of the Schomburg Collection (now Schomburg Center) at the New York Public Library, Project Y-003: To Improve Teachers for Inner-City Schools, and his time teaching at Atlanta and Temple Universities. Reddick assembled several subject files related to his academic interests. These files include press photographs and other commercially available images of Black students and educational environments.

Reddick collected pictures of Black people in professional and occupational roles, especially the Black experience in the United States military. Reddick also assembled several press photographs of the Second Italo-Ethiopian War. There are many photographs of the activities of the Opportunities Industrialization Center, including meetings and presentations of their work to different communities. Lastly, pictures of various members of Phi Beta Sigma, a fraternity of which Reddick was a member, are present in the collection.

In the Civil Rights and Political Activities grouping, there are images of Reddick traveling with Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King on their trip to India in 1959, and Oslo, Norway in 1968 where King accepted the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Writings grouping contains photographs used for research and illustrations of Reddick's book projects, including *Crusader Without Violence: A Biography of Martin Luther King Jr.*, and two unpublished biographies about civil rights leaders Ralph Abernathy and Leon Sullivan.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American college teachers
African American universities and colleges
African Americans and libraries
Authors, Black
Civil rights movements -- United States
Community activists
Families, Black
Historians -- United States
Occupational training

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Negatives (photographs)
Photographs

Names

Abernathy, Ralph, 1926-1990
King, Coretta Scott, 1927-2006
King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968
Reddick, Lawrence Dunbar, 1910-1995
Schomburg, Arthur Alfonso, 1874-1938
Sullivan, Leon Howard, 1922-2001
Alabama State College
Coppin State College
Dillard University
Montgomery Improvement Association
Opportunities Industrialization Center (Philadelphia, Pa.)
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity
Temple University

Container List

Personal

- b. 1 f. 1-2 1900s-1970s
- b. 12 f. 4
- b. 13 f. 1
- b. 1 f. 3 Portraits 1950s-1960s
- b. 1 f. 4 Album 1965-1967
- b. 1 f. 5 Photo Pin 1960s

Professional

Academic Career

- b. 1 f. 6-7 1970s-1980s
- b. 1 f. 8 Atlanta University Library 1932-1955
- b. 13 f. 2
- b. 2 Project Y-003: To Improve Teachers for Inner-City Schools 1964-1967
Includes photographs and captions included in *What Is Y-003?*, published in 1967.
- b. 3 Temple University 1967-1979
- b. 13 f. 7

Opportunities Industrialization Center

- b. 4 1963-1970s
- b. 5 f. 1-3
- b. 12 f. 5
- b. 13 f. 3
- b. 5 f. 4 Continuing Education for Women (C.E.W.) 1963-1970s
- b. 5 f. 5 Edward Brooks 1963-1970s
- b. 5 f. 6 Leon Sullivan 1963-1970s
- b. 5 f. 7-8 Lyndon B. Johnson 1967
- b. 6 f. 1 Management Training Program 1970
- b. 6 f. 2 Opportunities Industrialization Center West (O.I.C.W.) 1963-1970s
- b. 6 f. 4 Press Photographs 1963-1970s
- b. 6 f. 5 Robert F. Kennedy 1966
- b. 6 f. 6-7 Television Program 1960s

Professional Organizations

- b. 7 f. 1-2 Phi Beta Sigma 1936-1989
- b. 13 f. 4
- b. 7 f. 3 Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library 1939-1948

Subject Files

The photographs in these files are related to several of Reddick's academic projects, including his work with the Kinte Library Project, his scholarship of Black soldiers in World War II and the United States military, his educational and vocational training projects, and more.

- b. 7 f. 4 Education 1930s-1970s
- b. 7 f. 5-7 Military 1930s-1970s
- b. 8 f. 1 Includes photographs of the Second Italo-Ethiopian War.
- b. 8 f. 2-4 Occupations and Trades 1930s-1970s
- b. 13 f. 5

Civil Rights and Political Activities

- b. 8 f. 5 1950s-1978
- Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King Jr

Civil Rights and Political Activities (cont.)

Coretta Scott King and Martin Luther King Jr (cont.)

- b. 8 f. 6 Trip to India 1959
- b. 9 f. 1-2
- b. 9 f. 3-4 Nobel Prize Trip to Oslo, Norway 1964

Writing

- b. 9 f. 5 *Crusader Without Violence: A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* 1929-1959
- b. 10
- b. 11 f. 1-4 Includes photographs of Martin Luther King Jr. throughout his life, including childhood, his work
- b. 13 f. 6 with the Montgomery Improvement Association, and more.
- b. 11 f. 5 Unpublished Biography of Leon Sullivan 1940-1970
- b. 12 f. 1-2 Unpublished Biography of Ralph Abernathy 1947-1970
- b. 12 f. 3 History of the Black College in America -- Langston University 1982-1983