

# Black Voices

Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

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## Ten Years of Documenting African and African American Life

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### Franklin Collection Acquires Papers of Dr. Charles Watts

The John Hope Franklin Collection is pleased to announce its recent acquisition of the papers of Charles DeWitt Watts, a pioneering African American surgeon. The papers, recently given to the Collection by the Watts family, include correspondence, photographs, speeches, memoranda, certi-

icates and awards, along with other materials documenting the life of an established surgeon and great community leader.

Watts was born in Atlanta in 1917 and was the youngest of four children. After studying mathematics at Morehouse College, Watts earned a medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine. He completed his surgical residency in 1948 at Freedman's Hospital in Washington, D.C. under the tutelage of Dr. Charles Drew.

The first African-American to be certified by a surgical specialty board in North Carolina, Watts arrived in Durham in 1946. He joined the staff of Lincoln Hospital, where he served as chief of surgery at the hospital and also worked to prepare interns and residents for board certification.



**Above:** Watts pictured with former U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell. **Below:** Watts with wife, Constance Merrick Watts.

Nationally, Dr. Watts was a member of the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine, a fellow in the American College of Surgeons, and an active participant in the National Medical Association. He also was a trustee for Howard University from 1973 to 1993 and was

named a University Emeriti Trustee in 1993.

Watts served for 28 years as vice president and medical director for North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Co., the largest African-American managed insurer in the nation. In 2002, the Duke University School of Medicine created the Charles Watts Travel Award in his honor. The fund supports student and faculty travel to study culturally specific medical issues. Dr. Watts received an honorary degree from Duke in 1991.



Watts opened his own private practice and spent his life working to provide medical services to the poor.

Watts was instrumental in the establishment of Lincoln Community Health Center, a modern free-standing clinic, which opened its doors on the grounds of the former Lincoln Hospital in 1970. Watts also served as adjunct clinical professor of surgery at Duke University and director of student health at North Carolina Central University.

Watts died on July 12, 2004 at age 86. The Franklin Collection is proud to house his papers.

**In the News:**



JHFC Director, Karen Jean Hunt, was the focus of a Wright State University advertising campaign and was featured in the Society of American Archivists newsletter.

**Digitized Collections**

The Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library publishes digitized versions of finding aids, subject guides, and materials from selected collections. Listed below are collections and exhibits bearing on African and African American studies.

**African American Women**  
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/collections/african-american-women.html>

**Third Person, First Person**  
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/slavery/>

**Still Going On**  
<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sgo/start.html>

**African Americans in Africa**

The John Hope Franklin Collection seeks to highlight the experiences of African Americans on the African Continent. Most recently, the JHFC acquired materials from renown dentist, Daniel Collins.

Collins was born on June 11, 1916, in Darling, South Carolina. After earning his DDS from Meharry College in 1942, he became the first black dentist on the faculty of the School of Dental Science at the University of San

Francisco, in 1942. Once in California, Collins helped establish the Urban League's San Francisco Bay Area Office, the San Francisco Foundation for Aged Colored People and the Northern California United Negro College Fund.

In addition, Collins ran a small Nigerian import and export company in the 1960s. The first accession of his materials document his time in West Africa.



Daniel Collins with Chief Adeye, African Associate. 1960.

**JHFC Acquires Correspondence for Painter Papers**

Dr. Nell Irvin Painter, Edwards Professor of History at Princeton University, has been known for opening her home to hundreds of students, faculty, staff and alumni. A true sense of that generosity of friendship is now available to researchers.

The JHFC is pleased to announce the recent acquisition of a collection of per-



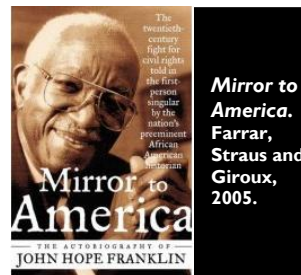
sonal letters between Nell Painter and Jacqueline Bryant Smith, a childhood friend from Northern California. Span-

ning 1957 to 2001, the letters document Painter's years in Ghana, Chapel Hill, NC, and Princeton, NJ., bearing witness to a comaraderie that endured time and distance. They add to a collection of Painter's papers that is already rich in history and insight into the African diasporic world.

**John Hope Franklin Publishes Autobiography**

African American autobiographies since Olaudah Equiano's 1789 *Interesting Narrative* have exposed in elegant prose the contradictions, frustrations, hopes and dreams that have come to characterize the lives of many racial and ethnic minorities living in the U.S.

John Hope Franklin adds his first-person narrative to those of artists, intellectuals, and activists such as Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, and Audre Lorde with his new autobiography, *Mirror to*



*America.*

The book chronicles Dr. Franklin's long career as an accomplished historian and leading public intellectual. Toni Morrison has called the autobiography "an astonishing, beautiful, deeply intelli-

gent record of an extraordinary life. Required reading lest we forget what is possible in a race-based society." Former President Bill Clinton says that it "calls upon all Americans to look at our nation's past so that we may destroy the color line that continues to divide our country."

The highly anticipated autobiography will be available in bookstores on November 2. Dr. Franklin will share remarks about it at our 10th Anniversary Celebration on November 19.

## John Hope Franklin Papers Open to Public

The Rare Book, Manuscripts, and Special Collections Library (RBMSCL) at Duke University is preparing to open its collection of the papers of John Hope Franklin to the public. This marks a watershed moment for the ten-year-old collection, which has an ongoing collecting focus in the papers of prominent African American intellectuals.

When Dr. Franklin first decided to donate his papers to the RBMSCL, the collection named after him was still in its infant stages. The Franklin Collection, then named "The Franklin Center for African and African American Documentation," was inaugurated by a \$200,000 gift from Glaxo Wellcome, Inc., in honor of Dr. Franklin. Dedicated to preserving the resources critical to research by scholars and teachers of African and African American studies, the



**John Hope Franklin with President Bill Clinton, June 1997. Official White House photograph.**

meant to be the cornerstone of the Collection. "I believe by placing my papers here I can help the development of a strong center for African American studies. I hope my papers will assist in making this a very important place for this kind of intellectual and literary activity," he said ten years ago in an interview. The renowned scholar of Southern history believed that the Collection would attract students of history and black culture as well as others.

Ten years later, the Collection is celebrating its anniversary as well as the long-awaited opening of the Franklin papers. Karen Jean Hunt, Director of the John Hope Franklin Collection, said that the RBMSCL staff "is happy and pleased that the opening of Dr. Franklin's materials coincides with the publication of his autobiography and the celebration of the Collection's ten-year anniversary." The Franklin Collection will celebrate its anniversary and the publication of Dr. Franklin's autobiography on November 18, commemorating the occasion with a one-day symposium in the Gothic Reading Room.



**John Hope Franklin with Former Duke President Nannerl O. Keohane at the opening of the John Hope Franklin Collection in 1995.**

Collection is a repository for books, manuscripts, and other rare materials relating to African and African American life.

**A Long-Awaited Opening**  
Dr. Franklin's papers were

### A Resource for Scholars

The Franklin Papers comprise a vital collection spanning the years of 1889 to 1998. They document Franklin's professional career as a historian as well as his personal life and political interests, focusing especially on his activities since 1970.

Hunt believes that the papers will be invaluable to scholars of African American history. "It is important that in the study of African American history, there be attention to the role of intellectuals. We must give serious thought not just to history itself, but to the process of *writing* history," she said. "Scholars, now, will be able to review not just the scholarship of John Hope Franklin, but also the *life* of John Hope Franklin."

Items in the Franklin Papers include correspondence, research material, typescripts, drafts, manuscripts, printed material, notebooks, information and multimedia packets, clippings, photographs, video and audiocassettes, as well as a few artifacts. The earliest materials in the collection focus on Franklin's writings and research, particularly regarding the 19th-century army officer, minister, and historian George Washington Williams. The collection is organized into the following series: Writings, the Advisory Board for the President's Initiative on Race (ABPIR), Photographs, and Correspondence.

*Researchers interested in using the Franklin Papers should contact RBMSCL Research Services (Phone: 660-5825).*

The Franklin Papers contain several personal items from the Franklin family.

**Below:** A birthday wish from the Franklin family to John Whittington Franklin, printed in a local newspaper.



*Persons using the holdings and services of the Franklin Collection may also be interested in the programs and activities of the John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies, also located at Duke University. Franklin Center website:*

<http://www.duke.edu/web/jhfcenter/>

### Online Exhibits

**Dreaming of Freedom: The Intellectual Journey of Dr. John Hope Franklin**

[http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/franklin/dreaming\\_freedom/index.htm](http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/franklin/dreaming_freedom/index.htm)

**Beyond Textbooks (A special online exhibit celebrating Peace Corps Week 2005)**

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/franklin/afaminafrica.html>



John Hope Franklin Collection of  
African and African American  
Documentation

Rare Book, Manuscript, and  
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We're on the web!  
[http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/  
franklin/](http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/franklin/)

#### ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The John Hope Franklin Collection is a repository for African and African American Studies documentation and an educational outreach division of the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University. Founded in November 1995 with the support of its namesake, the distinguished historian John Hope Franklin, the Collection seeks to collect, preserve, and promote the use of library materials bearing on the history of Africa and people of African descent.

Those wishing to donate materials to the John Hope Franklin Collection for African and African American Documentation should contact the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at (919) 660-5922.

### Franklin Collection Research Grants

The John Hope Franklin Collection of African and African American Documentation offers grants annually for researchers whose work would benefit from access to the library's archival and rare printed collections. The maximum award per applicant is \$1,000.

The 2005-2006 recipients are:

**Dr. Leslie Brown**, Washington University, for research on African American life in the Jim Crow South, 1890-1965.

**Dr. Douglas Bristol**, University of Southern Mississippi, for research on "outsider entrepreneurs," 1880-1935.

**Dr. Eric Gardner**, Saginaw Valley State University, for research

on the African American literary community in Reconstruction-era Washington, D.C.

**Mary Rizzo**, University of Minnesota, for research on African-American urban consumer cooperatives from the 1930s through the 1970s.

**Kijua Sanders-McMurtry**, for research on the Links, Inc., a black women's service organization (1946-2004).

**Brent Tarter and Dr. John Deal**, Library of Virginia, for their research on African American political and community leaders in late nineteenth-century Virginia for volume 4 of the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*.

**Dr. Anne Valk**, Southern Illinois University, for research on African American life in the Jim Crow

South, 1890-1965.

**Joshua Williams**, Louisiana Tech University, for research on missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church to slaves in Arkansas, 1836-1860.

If you missed this year's deadline, applications are reviewed in January, with recipients announced in March. For more information, go to [http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/spe\\_coll/grants.html](http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/spe_coll/grants.html).

