

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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A Picture is Still Worth a Thousand Words ...

The words “manuscript” and “special collections” often conjure images of old papers, diaries, newspaper clippings, and other print and written material. Seldom do they suggest images of images.

As scholarly interest in the visual culture of the African American and black diasporic experience grows, the John Hope Franklin Collection is building an archive of photographic holdings. Most recently, the Franklin staff came across some interesting photographs in the papers of noted journalist **Chuck Stone**, who is pictured (right) with author James Baldwin and James Farmer, first national director of CORE (left).

As a picture is often said to be “worth a thousand words,” we would like to highlight some of our other visual holdings.

The **Max Belcher Papers** contain a number of photographs that explore the complex relationships between migration, identity, and history. This collection includes black and white and color contact sheets, study prints, and fine prints of the Philadelphia-born

photographer’s work in Liberia, Vietnam, Israel, the Dominican Republic, Canada, and the United States.



Photograph. Chuck Stone Papers.

Researchers might also be interested in the **Michael Francis Blake Papers**, containing 117 photographs. Most of the photos are studio poses, printed as photographic postcards. And although a majority of the people in the photographs have not been identified, these images reveal a great deal about clothing, style, and the aspirations of black South Carolinians.

The **Cowherd Family Photographs** make up another collection consisting of early twentieth-century photographs of African Americans. The photos

were taken in a range of settings in the Ohio River Valley, from poses at home to formal portraits, some bearing the mark of studios in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana.

The **Griffith J. Davis Papers** comprise one of Special Collections’ most prized possessions. The collection contains photographs of notable African Americans, including Langston Hughes, Sidney Poiter, and Asa T. Spaulding, Sr.

The **Penn Family Photo Albums** are three meticulously annotated photo albums, apparently compiled by Ralph Milton Penn, that chart the social life of a black family from West Virginia. Subjects in a majority of the photographs are identified and document religious, social, and family events: Mason parades, processions of the Heroines of Jericho, homecoming at Bluefield State College, church baptisms, and communion feasts among other occasions.

Those wishing to donate visual materials to the Franklin Collection should contact us at: fanklin-collection@duke.edu



Last November, Karen Jean Hunt, JHFC director, joined more than 219,500 American Red Cross disaster relief workers from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands responding to Hurricane Katrina. Hunt volunteered to serve with the American Red Cross Disaster Services team in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. During her two-week stay, on the Gulf Coast, Hunt conducted home visits to determine emergency needs.

Other Collections of African and African American Materials

[Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture - New York Public Library](#)

[The Moorland-Spangarn Research Center - Howard University](#)

[Robert W. Woodruff Library - Atlanta University Center](#)

[The Amistad Research Center - Tulane University](#)

[The Martin Luther King, Jr., Papers Project - Stanford University](#)

JHFC Director Joins Conversation on Katrina Relief

The John Hope Franklin Center for International and Interdisciplinary Study is one of Duke's most vibrant intellectual centers. Its "Wednesday's at the Center" lunchtime conversation series hosts distinguished scholars, editors, journalists, artists, and leaders, who speak informally about their work in conversation with those who attend.

Karen Jean Hunt, director of the John Hope Franklin Collection, joined a conversation with Charles Payne, professor and chair of African and African American Studies, entitled, "What's Going On: A Katrina Update."

The April 12 conversation also featured Pearlle C. Steele, director of Emer-

gency Services for the North Carolina Red Cross, who discussed the relief organization's role in Katrina recovery, and Shirl Spicer, curator of Community History at the North Carolina Museum of History, who shared her experience of working with a team sent to the Gulf Coast to document damages caused to cultural sites and archives.

Payne addressed rebuilding the New Orleans school system, while Hunt spoke on the mental trauma facing Katrina evacuees.



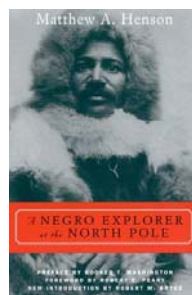
Counter-clockwise from top: Karen Jean Hunt; Charles Payne; Pearlle Steele; Shirl Spicer.

Library Highlights Black Voices

Part of an archive's function is to preserve historic documents and manuscripts that can help shape public conversation about historical events and narratives.

Often, what we acquire for the Franklin Collection documents highly contested historical terrain. A recent addition to the Franklin Collection, a first edition copy of Matthew Henson's *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole*, is part of a controversial body of literature and public debate about Henson's role in Admiral Robert E. Peary's

1909 expedition to the North Pole. The 1912 autobiography, part of our *Black Voices* collection of first-person narratives, is,



"A Negro Explorer at the North Pole" by Matthew Henson

more than a travelogue, a "book with a story to tell," according to RMBSCCL Collection Development Librarian Andrew Armacost.

"What is more interesting than the event—getting to the pole—is the reputation of the event," Armacost added.

While scholars and exploration enthusiasts battle the questions about the expedition's legacy—*Did they actually reach the Pole? Should Henson be remembered as Peary's functionary or a leader in his own right?*—it is, perhaps, only historical documents such as Henson's autobiography that will be able to shed light on the difficult questions of history and historical inquiry.

Dr. Franklin Speaks at 2006 Commencement

Whenever Dr. John Hope Franklin, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of History at Duke University, speaks at a public gathering, people take note. Few will forget the “counter-inaugural” speech he delivered at his 90th birthday celebration at Duke in 2005, in which he offered “Some Reflections on Racial Inequality in America.” And with the recent publication of his autobiography, *Mirror to America: The Autobiography of John Hope Franklin*, his lecture calendar has been filled with speaking engagements delivered to standing-room-only crowds.

This spring, Dr. Franklin offered his wisdom and wit to the Duke community at one of its most important annual celebrations. Dr. Franklin was chosen as the 2006 commencement speaker in a decision that Duke University President Richard Brodhead said reflected Franklin’s long-time value to the university.

“When you choose a commencement speaker, you



From the Franklin Collection archive: Graduation portrait of John Hope Franklin. Fisk University, 1935.



Dr. Franklin’s speech urged students to take time to improve society and, in particular, to assist the nation’s schools and fight against racism. “The community and the nation need you to use your energies and talents to assist our government and the people as they work for the good of society,” Franklin said. He encouraged the graduates to direct their energies to improving the nation’s schools, which he described as “a disaster area.” “You know the scenario as well as anyone: ungovernable students, rampant gangs, drug and alcohol abuse extending below the middle schools, an over-emphasis on athletics and an under-emphasis on serious study and academic achievement.”

Full text of the speech may be found at: http://dukenews.duke.edu/2006/05/jhfranklin_gradspeech.html.

want somebody of serious accomplishment who will tune into the occasion,” Brodhead said in an interview with the *Chronicle*, Duke’s student-run daily. “[Dr. Franklin] knows this place... This has been his chosen home for 25 years.”

Dr. Franklin added this May 14 address, to the 2006 graduates, to a list of his accomplishments that includes the Presidential Medal of Freedom and over 100 honorary degrees.

FRANKLIN SCHOLARS

This spring, Karen Jean Hunt presented a library skills session for the John Hope Franklin Scholars Program, a campus initiative to help local high school students prepare for college by improving their research and writing skills through the study of history.

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/jhcenter/>

Black Voices

The John Hope Franklin Collection Newsletter is published each semester to keep the public informed about activities, acquisitions, and other news related to the John Hope Franklin Collection.

Recent issues are available online and by mail. [Contact us](#) to join the newsletter online mailing list.

Franklin Collection Says Goodbye to Intern

The Franklin Collection’s research intern, Erica Edwards, will leave Duke University to join the faculty of Williams College as an Assistant Professor of African-American Studies.

Edwards has recently earned her Ph.D. in Literature at Duke, where she has been studying African American culture and political theory and working on a dissertation entitled, “Contesting



Charisma: Political Leadership in Contemporary African American Culture.”

Before coming to Duke, the Silver Spring, MD, native

earned her B.A. in English and Spanish from Spelman College in Atlanta, GA, in 1999.

Edwards will miss her Duke colleagues, especially the friends and donors who have made the Franklin Collection a special and unique repository for African and African American materials—especially the collection’s namesake, Dr. Franklin—but is excited to embark upon the next phase in her life’s journey.



John Hope Franklin Collection of
African and African American
Documentation

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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.

2006-2007 Franklin Travel Grant Recipients

The John Hope Franklin Collection is proud to announce the recipients of the 2006-2007 Special Collections Travel Grant winners. These nine scholars were awarded amounts up to \$1000 to cover expenses for travel to the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library.

David Brighouse, Harvard University, "Scholar Activists During the Modern Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1970."

Michelle Commander, University of Southern California, "Repatriates, Expatriates, and the Role of Pan-Africanism in African American Diasporic Community Formation."

Kathryn St. Clair Ellis, University of Tennessee, "African American Social and Legal Status from 1866-1930."

Dr. Yasuhiro Katagiri, Tokai University, "Cry Aloud and Spare Not: Southern Segregationists, Northern Messiahs, and Anti-Communism in the Civil Rights South."

Dr. Paul Ortiz, UC Santa Cruz, "Jim Crow South, Segregation, and African American History, 1880s-1950s."

Jennifer Roady-Lawson, University of Georgia, "Building Schools, Constructing Race, Resisting White Supremacy: Education in Leon County, Florida after Brown, 1954-2004."

Dr. David Ryden, University of Houston, "The London West India Interest in the Age of Abolition, 1780-1807."

Jack L. Schermerhorn, University of Virginia, "Against All

Odds: Slavery and Enslaved Families in the Making of the Antebellum Chesapeake."

Dr. Thomas J. Ward, Rockhurst University, "African American Lawyers in the Segregated South."

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.

Deadline for the 2007-2008 academic year will be January 15, 2007. For additional information:

[scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/specoll/
grants.html](http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/specoll/grants.html)

