

Albany Institute of History & Art
Library

MG 10

**RUTH ROBERTS' AFRICAN AMERICANS IN ALBANY
RESEARCH COLLECTION**

1967-1975

1 lin. ft., 4 boxes

February 1997

Scope and Content Note

The material that now comprises the African-Americans in Albany Research Collection was not initially intended as an ongoing project. It began in 1967 as a research project at Guilderland Junior/Senior High School where Ruth Winne Roberts was teaching at the time. The project involved members of the Yorkers Club. At that time, little had been attempted in researching black history on a local level. Alex Haley's *Roots* was still several years away from publication.

As an experiment to determine whether any information might be recovered, the students copied census records, church records, and names from city directories and other primary source material. Success in these areas proved that there was a basis for continuing such work. Along with documentary research, the students also interviewed elderly residents for oral accounts of World Wars I and II and of social life in Albany at the turn of the century.

This early work was unfortunately aborted the following year when the configuration of the school system was changed and Ruth Roberts was assigned to the new middle school with a younger student body. No longer able to carry on the school project, she then continued the research on her own. Shortly after, Mrs. Roberts became involved with an oral history project with African-American teenagers at Arbor Hill Community Center, under the aegis of the NYS Historical Association. At this time some contemporary material was added to the collection.

In the early 1970s Mrs. Roberts was commissioned by the Albany Urban Renewal Agency to research early Albany African-American history. She later completed a justification study for the NYS Parks and Recreation Department as part of preservation efforts in Albany's South End. These projects required more specific data, including historic sites and biographical sketches of prominent black men who had resided in that area.

Independent research continued until 1974/75 when Mrs. Roberts was commissioned by the Albany County Bicentennial Commission to produce an audio/video presentation on the black experience in the Upper Hudson Valley. This resulted first in a slide/tape show: "The Sound of a Far Off Drum". The show was later videotaped and housed in the Albany Public Library. Following this project, Mrs. Roberts did no further research and her notes remained dormant until presented to the Library. This collection has been left as originally created by Mrs. Roberts.

Ruth Winne Roberts earned a BA in American History and MA degrees in American Folk Culture and History Museum Studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program, an affiliate of SUNY at Oneonta.

The collection contains brochures, notes, photocopied documents, clippings, invitations, programs, articles, bibliographies and photographs relating to the history of African Americans in Albany.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	
1	1	Anti-Slavery and Abolition Movement
	2	Arts & Cultural
	3	Attitudes/Prejudice
	4	Bibliographies (also includes Interview Notes)
	5	Black History/ General
	6	Business and Occupation
	7	Church and Cemetery Records
	8	Civil War
	9	Colored Men Conventions
	10	Courthouse Records
	11	Education
	12	Emancipation
	13	Laws re: Blacks in New York State
	14	Manumissions
	15	Military - 17th c. to Revolutionary War and War of 1812
	16	Miscellaneous Black History
	17	Organizations - 20th Century
	18	Photographs & Exhibition Materials
	19	Politics
	20	Population/Statistics/Census/Directories
	21	Press (see also Box 4)
	22	Religion

Box Folder

[1]	23	Slavery
	24	Social and Fraternal
	25	Underground Railroad
	26	Blake Family (Adam Sr. and Jr.)
	27	Douge and Related Families
	28	Henry Highland Garnet
	29	Henry Johnson
	30	William Henry Johnson
	31	Benjamin Lattimore
	32	Edmonia Lewis
	33	Stephen Myers
	34	Miscellaneous Biography and Family Contemporary
	35	Nathaniel Paul
	36	Schuyler Family
	37	Sojourner Truth
2		Index Card Files and Research Notes
		Black History - Upstate New York:
		Genealogy and Families, A-T
3		Genealogy and Families, U-Z
		Social History
		Abolition/Anti-slavery
		Attitudes-Prejudice/Discrimination
		Civil Rights

Box Folder

[3] Social History, con't.
 Colored Men's Conventions
 Crime
 Culture/Arts
 Daily Life-Holidays & Customs
 Education
 Emancipation-NYS
 Housing
 Manumission
 Military
 Miscellaneous
 Occupations
 Population
 Press
 Religion
 Slavery
 Social
 Underground Railroad
Bibliography

4 Facsimile, "View of Castleton, N.Y. 1884"

Facsimile copies of the following newspapers, all ca. 1841-1842

The Tocsin of Liberty
The Albany Microscope
The Colored American
The Northern Star