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.
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<td>Arts &amp; Cultural</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Attitudes/Prejudice</td>
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<td>Bibliographies (also includes Interview Notes)</td>
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<td>Press (see also Box 4)</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Religion</td>
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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
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

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