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Retrospect

News from the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections at Winthrop University

February 2021

Volume 17, Number 1



Manuscript Collection Spotlight

By Andrew Johnston, Asst. Dir. of Archives and Special Collections



GRACE BEACHAM FREEMAN PAPERS

1886, 1940-2000s, ([Accession 78](#), [Accession 781](#), and [Accession 1339](#))

Grace Beacham Freeman [1916-2002] was a writer, poet, educator and the South Carolina Poet Laureate from 1985 to 1986. As the first female SC Poet Laureate, she was a pioneer in the state and helped usher in new appreciation for women writers and poets.

Freeman, born in Spartanburg, SC, attended Converse College graduating with a Bachelor's degree in English in 1937. She taught English in public schools 1937-1941 and later did post-graduate work at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

In 1941, she married Dr. John Alderman Freeman [1918-2007] Biology professor and Chair at Winthrop (1952-1982). They had four children. From 1954 through 1964, she wrote a syndicated column about family life with four children titled, "At Our House." She also wrote other magazine and newspaper columns as well as television and radio scripts. She was author of several books and her work has appeared in many other publications. Before being named as the fourth SC Poet Laureate by Gov. Richard Riley in 1985, Freeman was a Poet-in-the-Schools with the SC Arts Commission and served as a poet therapist with Hall Institute, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, the American Psychiatric Association, and the National Poetry Therapy Foundation.

Freeman was a friend and contemporary of Archibald H. Rutledge [1883–1973] first SC Poet Laureate 1934-1973. Rutledge recognized her talent early on and was her mentor.

Her Papers document the development of her career as a writer and consists of correspondence (personal, family, and professional), newspaper clippings, poems, drafts of stories and plays, radio scripts, photographs, awards and certificates, and financial records, mainly relating to Freeman's activities as a poet, dramatist, radio script and feature story writer. The collection also includes general information on the Freeman and Beacham families, Rock Hill, South Carolina history, the SC Arts Commission, correspondence with Archibald Rutledge, and a diary (1880) of Freeman's aunt, Lula M. Bailey, in which she describes the life, thoughts, and activities of a seventeen-year old deaf girl living in Marion, Alabama.

For more information on the Manuscript Collection, contact Andrew Johnston, Asst. Director of Archives and Special Collections at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



Quote of the Quarter

Nearly 40 years ago, in the December 1981 issue of *Winthrop College News*, Dr. Connie Lee [1930-1992], Winthrop's Vice President for Development wrote an article titled "Development: Today's Plan for a Better Tomorrow." Dr. Lee (Winthrop M.A.1972), one of the first two women VPs at Winthrop, made these observations that are still true today.



"[Winthrop] does not need money just for the sake of having money. What it does need is the support an endowment can provide for the extra margin of excellence that you and I expect of Winthrop's academic programs . . . The question is, how do we maintain this expectation, this margin of excellence . . .? There are many ways to help—and Winthrop needs that help. The future of Winthrop depends on you and me and all of us pulling together. We must build an endowment for enrichment today and to preserve the past for the future."

Dr. Lee, who worked at Winthrop from 1971 to 1982, left Winthrop to teach history at York Technical College. In 1986, she was appointed to a three year term on the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Military and served an additional year as chair. In 1989, Dr. Lee earned the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service.

For more information concerning the *Quote of the Quarter* please contact Gina White at (803) 323-2334 or whitegp@winthrop.edu.

A Century Ago... Editorial from the [*Chester News, February 22, 1921, page 2, column 1*](#)



1922 Anderson Motor Car in front of Main Building

"A bill to place a tax of one cent a gallon on gasoline, and also motor oils, is now being considered by the South Carolina General Assembly. It is proposed to take the money derived from the tax and place it in the general funds of the State thereby reducing the state levy.

It strikes us that this is class legislation. The automobile crowd has been picked out to pay the taxes of the State and the money, instead of going for the improvement of the roads used by the autoists, is to go into the general fund.

Would the General Assembly place a tax of fifty cents on each bale of cotton grown in the state? No. Would they place a tax on hay? No.

Then why pick out gasoline?

We do not believe the people who own automobiles and trucks in South Carolina would object to a tax of one cent per gallon on gasoline if the money was to be spent on the highways, but they do seriously object to a tax being placed on them and the proceeds, which will amount to more than half a million dollars, going to the general fund.

The various automobile associations of the state should at once let the legislature know that they are against this kind of legislation."



From the Processing Archivist

By Carson Cope, Processing Archivist



Does your research interests lie in local genealogy and Catawba Region families? The Wade B. Roddey Papers, given to the Pettus Archives by the York County Public Library, provide a rich source of information on these topics. The collection is now fully processed and available to the public. The papers include information on a variety of local families from York and Chester Counties including the Roddey family, the Cherry family, the Knox family, the Hodges family, the Steele family, the Hyatt family, and the Culp family just to name a few. The contents of this collection primarily include documents such as correspondence, lineage charts, family records, Wade Roddey’s handwritten notes concerning the families, and other materials of a similar interest. There are approximately 20,000 sheets of paper for researchers to peruse in this collection. Furthermore, additional genealogical records concerning many of these families are also available in the Louise Pettus Papers. If you are interested in local families, do not hesitate to come in today and check out what the Louise Pettus Archives has to offer!

For more information on collections being processed, contact archives@winthrop.edu or (803) 323-2334



Photographs of the Quarter

By Brittany S. Pigford, Archivist

Association of Ebonites

In 1968 a group of African American students at Winthrop, feeling a need to preserve their Black identity and instill unity, established the Association of Ebonites—the first black student organization on campus. These students realized that nearly every area of Black culture is rooted in music. They determined that a gospel choir was a necessary component of preserving the history, culture, and values of their heritage. The Ebonites Gospel Choir was formed under the direction and leadership of Barbara Boyd with 15 members.



EBONITES: LEFT TO RIGHT, FIRST ROW: Sheila L. Fraser, Patricia Ware, President; Bernice White, Vice-President; Bernice Chaplin, Secretary; Beverly Love, Corresponding Secretary; Vicki Young, Treasurer; Keia Wright, Parliamentarian; Jacqueline Vanning, Patricia Jackson. SECOND ROW: Sally Bertha, Ernestine Lemmon, Claudette Hopkins, Mari Richardson, Gloria J. Chisholm, Geraldine Feemster, Cynthia Ann Lewis, Winifred Edwards.

1969-1970 Association of Ebonites



1972 Association of Ebonites

The Association of Ebonites sponsored, planned, and implemented the first “Black Week” (the precursor to Black History Month) at Winthrop March 21-27, 1971. Their goal was to unite the Winthrop

campus by improving black-white relations on campus. The first step to reaching that goal was to educate “the white population [about the] culture, heritage, and aims of Blacks.” The week included events highlighting art, drama, fashions, and a variety of speakers. To find out more about the first Black Week at Winthrop please see Pettus Archives digitized issue of The Johnsonian March 22, 1971, p 4. (<https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/thejohnsonian1970s/6/>)



Images of Black Week from the 1970s

The Association of Ebonites has sponsored many speakers in the more than half century since its founding including Nikki Giovanni, Julian Bond, Dick Gregory, and Yolanda King among other notable dignitaries.



Nikki Giovanni 1981



Julian Bond 1975



Yolanda King 1986

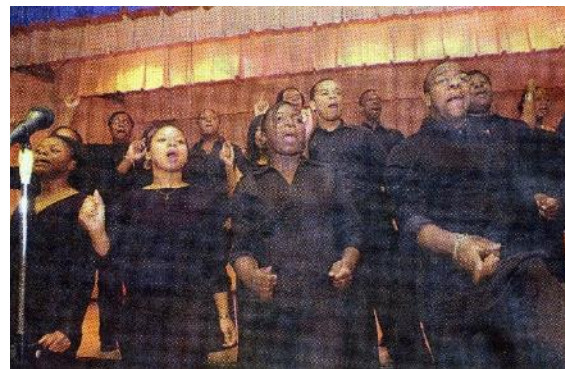
In 1976, the Ebonites produced and presented an original production titled “200 Years Later and Still Ain’t Got No Mule” The reviewer in the Johnsonian called it “a celebration of Black awareness.” The presentation consisted of five scenes: Heritage, Bondage, Emancipation, Rejection, and Visions of a New World. To read more about the production, please see the Pettus Archives digitized issue of The Johnsonian February 2, 1976, p 5. (<https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/thejohnsonian1970s/130/>)

Although, the Association of Ebonites is no longer active on campus, throughout their history on campus the members came together as a family to further their mission of preserving their history, culture, and heritage on Winthrop’s campus. More information about the group and their activities may be found in the Pettus Archives in Student Organizations Records, Association of Ebonites W425-6F-5. The finding aid may be viewed here:

https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/universityarchives_findingaids/509/.



Tony Jones, Mr. Ebonite 1980



Ebonite Choir 2001

For more information on the Photograph Collection, contact Brittany Pigford, Archivist at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



From the Echo Chamber

By Drew Russell and Baylee Hughes, Special Projects Archivists

The Pettus Archives has embarked on two special oral history projects: one to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks and one to add content and insights into the LGBTQIA+ community at Winthrop through the years. Recent Winthrop graduates Drew Russell and Baylee Hughes are spearheading the two projects.

September 11th Oral History Interviews

Drew Russell



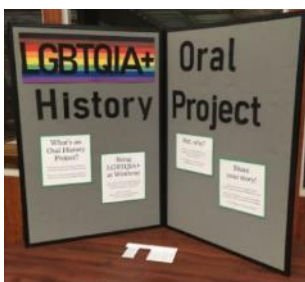
President George W. Bush spoke the following words on the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, “On 9/11, our nation saw the face of evil. Yet on that awful day, we also witnessed something distinctly American: ordinary citizens rising to the occasion, and responding with extraordinary acts of courage. We saw courage in office workers who were trapped on the high floors of burning skyscrapers—and called home so that their last words to their families would be of comfort and love. We saw courage in passengers aboard Flight 93, who recited the 23rd Psalm—and then charged the cockpit. And we saw courage in the Pentagon staff who made it out of the flames and smoke—and ran back in to answer cries for help. On this day, we remember the innocent who lost their lives—and we pay tribute to those who gave their lives so that others might live.”

The primary mission of the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections is to preserve documents and memorabilia that have intrinsic historical value. In that vein, Pettus Archives has begun collecting oral history interviews in remembrance of the horrible attacks on 9/11. These interviews will be a feature in an upcoming exhibit commemorating the 20th anniversary of the attacks, as well as being preserved for future generations to hear what was going on in not only the Winthrop and Rock Hill communities, but as a nation. As British Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote, “Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”

These interviews will be collected throughout the entire spring and summer 2021 semesters and will be added to the Louise Pettus Archives webpage. Due to the current situation with the COVID-19 virus, all interviews are being conducted and recorded via the Zoom platform. If you would like to share your story, please contact Andrew Russell at russellas@winthrop.edu to set up an appointment.

Oral History Project: Being LGBTQIA+ at Winthrop

Baylee Hughes



This oral history project is aimed towards members of the LGBTQIA+ community associated with Winthrop University. Volunteers include Winthrop alumni, current students, staff, faculty, and former employees. Interviews are being recorded to upload to the Pettus Archives’ Oral History section of Digital Commons at a later date. Digital Commons allows interviews to be accessed digitally. Some interviews will be audio-only or transcript-only to protect the participants’ privacy, but most will be available as full video. Many alumni and faculty have spread the project details, helping to bring in more than twenty volunteers who would like to share their important stories, with hopefully more

to come!

This project serves the academic community by adding first person insights of a “non-traditional” point of view of the campus and identity stories. Future researchers and interested patrons

will be able to access these records not only as a source of historic reference, but also to serve as materials to which those with similar identities can relate. For more information, contact Pettus Archives or check out the library's blog at <https://libguides.library.winthrop.edu/blog/LGBTQIA> and the display board in Dacus Library.

For more information on either project, contact the Archives at archives@winthrop.edu or 803-323-2334



Current Exhibitions

Gina White, Dir., Archives and Special Collections

Stepping Into Winthrop: Finding and Forming Black Family on Campus



Pettus Archives and Dacus Library collaborated on a virtual exhibit in honor of Black History Month 2021. The theme for the 2021 Black History Month chosen by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.” Choosing this theme as a basis, the exhibit highlights African American Winthrop student organizations that enable students to form chosen family groups as a way to bond with each other and make the college experience more pleasant and fulfilling. The exhibit features information and photographs, housed in the Pettus Archives, from a number of student organizations and campus activities from the very first organization formed on campus in 1968, to Black Week (the precursor to Black History Month), to predominately Black Greek Letter Organizations illustrating families of choice in addition to families of birth.

To view this online exhibit, click on the image above on this link:

<http://steppingintowinthrop.weebly.com/>

For more information, contact the Pettus Archives at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



University Collection Spotlight

By Kaitlin Burdette, Archivist

Columns



While writing this column for the newsletter, the irony was not lost on me that my subject today would be: Columns... Two, in fact, were recently donated to the archives by the family of Dr. Ross Webb, who was a Winthrop professor from 1967 to 2003, and served as the Winthrop University Historian. After much research from my wonderful colleagues, these columns were finally identified as support columns for a mantel and fireplace believed to be located in the Presidential Office Suite in Main Building. Their age is unclear, but we have photographs of the columns from the 1950s. Dr. Webb kindly saved and preserved the columns when they were being removed during a renovation of the building. We are so grateful he did! Now, they have found their way back to Winthrop, and are proudly displayed in the archives. If you remember these columns or know more about them, we would love to hear from you. Thank you for reading!



1954 – May Queen, Barbara Bender



1950s—Mrs. Lee Wicker Kinard

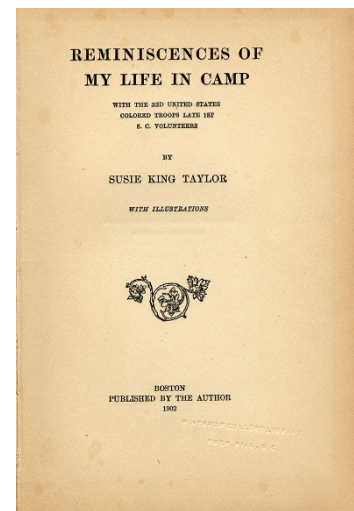
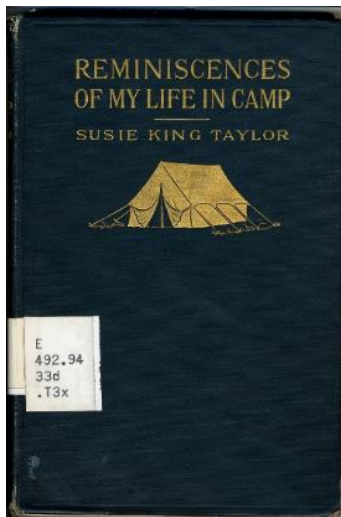
For more information on this collection or other collections in the Louise Pettus Archives, please contact us (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu, or take a look at our website <http://libguides.library.winthrop.edu/archives/home>



Rare Book Collection Spotlight

By Gina Price White, Dir. of Archives and Special Collections

Reminiscences of My Life in Camp



Pettus Archives rare book collection contains a captivating volume written by an uncommon but exceptional author. Susie King Taylor [1848-1912], army nurse, teacher, and author accomplished much in her lifetime overcoming slavery, hardship, and misfortune. She was the author of *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp with the 33d United States Colored Troops, Late 1st S.C. Volunteers* and the only African American woman to publish a memoir of her Civil War experiences. She was born into slavery in Liberty County, Georgia on August 6, 1848. Taylor was able to get an education by attending secret schools despite harsh laws forbidding slaves to learn to read and write. Her memoirs tell of her early life, her escape from slavery, her experiences with the First South Carolina troops including teaching the regiment of former slaves to read, and her postwar life. The memoir, published in 1902, is the fascinating story of a remarkable woman who overcame adversity to become not only the sole African American woman to publish an account of war experiences but also one of the first African American army nurses.

For more information on the Rare Book Collection, contact Gina White, Director of Archives and Special Collections at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



News Flash from the Past

By Gina Price White, Dir. of Archives and Special Collections



The Association of Ebonites (AOE) began the celebration of Black History Week (the precursor to Black History Month) in 1971. They continued that tradition throughout the next 45 years. In 1994, the following article appeared in the *Johnsonian* on February 23, 1994 to inform the Winthrop Community about Black History Month offerings on campus.

Student's Original Work Performed On-Stage as Part of Celebration

By Carmen Coleman, Staff Writer; *Johnsonian*, Feb 23, 1994 p 2

This week the Association of Ebonites (AOE) will present a play called *Dealin'* as part of its continuing celebration of Black History Month. *Dealin'* was written and is directed by Winthrop student Robert Johnson. The play arose out of Johnson's own exposure to ghettos all over America. Johnson said, "The play is about a young man involved with drugs who has dropped out of school and is morally struggling within himself about what he's doing." Hanan Nichols, an AOE faculty adviser and actress in the play said, "It's very emotional. It has so much realism. There's something in the play for everybody."

Johnson is optimistic about the play's success. "I think everybody's going to come and enjoy the play because they're going to see something out of their life on that stage," Johnson said.

To benefit the community, a pre-performance of *Dealin'* will be given for kids involved in the Big Brother/Big Sister program on Wednesday. Johnson said, "I think that everyone should come see the play because it takes a slice out of everyday American life and puts it on stage and magnifies it so that everyone can see what's really going on in America."

Dealin' will take place Thursday, February 24 [1994] in Tillman Auditorium at 8:00. The play is free of charge and is an approved cultural event.

To view the entire issue of the [Johnsonian February 23, 1994](#), follow the link.

For more information on the Winthrop newspaper files in the Archives contact Gina Price White, Dir. of Archives at (803) 323-2334 or archives@winthrop.edu.



Collegiate Contemplations

By Gina Price White, Dir., Archives and Special Collections

In the March 1919 edition of *The Winthrop Journal* the student literary publication, Sophie Dabbs, Class of 1920 wrote this poem.

In Exile



A winding path 'neath leafy trees,
The sound of running water near:
A flash of red wings in the breeze,
And woodland murmurs everywhere!

My wandering feet unwitting strayed
Across the grass, 'neath skies of blue;
I rested in the cooling shade,
And thought of home and love—and you!

For information on the Archives' collections and holdings, how to donate historical material, or how you can help, contact:

Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections

Telephone: (803) 323-2334

E-Mail: archives@winthrop.edu

Website: <http://libguides.library.winthrop.edu/archives/home>

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