Guide to the Manet Harrison Fowler and Manet Helen Fowler Papers

JWJ MSS 59

by Jennifer Meehan

2009

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
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Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

**CALL NUMBER:** JWJ MSS 59

**CREATOR:** Fowler, Manet Harrison, 1895-1976

**TITLE:** Manet Harrison Fowler and Manet Helen Fowler papers

**DATES:** 1902-1984

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 2.88 linear feet (9 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection consists of material created and accumulated by Manet Harrison Fowler and her daughter Manet Helen Fowler. The Manet Harrison Fowler material documents her work as a singer, musician, and educator with the Mwalimu School and the Texas Association of Negro Musicians. The Manet Helen Fowler material documents her various research and professional activities with the Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society and other organizations. Material includes photographs; printed material relating to the Mwalimu School and sound recordings of the Mwalimu Festival Chorus; programs for performances by and sound recordings of Manet Harrison Fowler; and original oil paintings by Manet Harrison Fowler. Also included are correspondence, research files, and personal papers of Manet Helen Fowler. The collection provides documentation of African American musicians and music education, particularly African American women musicians and teachers, during and after the Harlem Renaissance.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fowler

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.fowler.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder
Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Conditions Governing Access
The materials are open for research.

Box 5 (sound recordings): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use
The Manet Harrison Fowler Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation
Manet Harrison Fowler Papers. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information
Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization. Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Manet Harrison Fowler (1895-1976)
Manet Harrison Fowler was an African American singer, musician, and educator from Fort Worth, Texas. She graduated from the Tuskegee Institute in 1913 and studied at the Chicago College of Music. She co-founded the Texas Association of Negro Musicians and in 1928 founded the Mwalimu School in Texas, later relocating it to Harlem. The school was associated with the Harlem Renaissance, providing educational opportunities in the arts for Harlem’s residents. Under the direction of Fowler, the Mwalimu School choir regularly performed and recorded. Fowler was also a painter whose style incorporated religious and civil rights themes.

Manet Harrison Fowler was the wife of Stephen H. Fowler, and the mother of four children: Manet Helen (b. 1918), Stephen Hamilton (b. 1918), George Harrison (b. 1920), and Carroll Lacy (b. 1924).
Manet Helen Fowler (b. 1918)

Manet Helen Fowler was the eldest daughter of Manet Harrison Fowler and Stephen H. Fowler. In 1952, she became the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from a university in the United States.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of material created and accumulated by Manet Harrison Fowler and her daughter Manet Helen Fowler. The Manet Harrison Fowler material documents her work as a singer, musician, and educator with the Mwalimu School and the Texas Association of Negro Musicians. The Manet Helen Fowler material documents her various research and professional activities with the Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society and other organizations. Material includes photographs; printed material relating to the Mwalimu School and sound recordings of the Mwalimu Festival Chorus; programs for performances by and sound recordings of Manet Harrison Fowler; and oil paintings by Manet Harrison Fowler. Also included are correspondence, research files, and personal papers of Manet Helen Fowler. The collection provides documentation of African American musicians and music education, particularly African American women musicians and teachers, during and after the Harlem Renaissance.

Arrangement

Arranged into five series: I. Correspondence. II. Photographs. III. Other Papers. IV. Sound Recordings. V. Art Work.
Collection Contents

Series I. Correspondence

The bulk of the correspondence consists of letters received by Manet Helen Fowler, addressed to Miss Manet Fowler or Dr. Manet Fowler. Also found is some correspondence received by Manet Harrison Fowler and some Fowler family correspondence.

Correspondence is largely unsorted within files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1-7</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1930-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes some correspondence to Manet Harrison Fowler.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 8-10</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1960-1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 11</td>
<td>Correspondence from Lonnie Jackson</td>
<td>1939-1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 12</td>
<td>Correspondence to Manet Harrison Fowler from E. Clyde Whitlock</td>
<td>1962-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 13</td>
<td>Correspondence to Manet Harrison Fowler from Mrs. Guy R. Pitner</td>
<td>1962-1965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Series II. Photographs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 14-15</td>
<td>Harrison and Fowler Family Photographs</td>
<td>circa 1890-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 16</td>
<td>Manet Harrison Fowler Photographs</td>
<td>circa 1913-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2, f. 17</td>
<td>Mwalimu School Photographs</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 18-19</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Photographs</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Series III. Other Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 20</td>
<td>Manuscript music composed by Manet Harrison Fowler</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 21-23</td>
<td>Mwalimu School</td>
<td>1932-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 24</td>
<td>Texas Association of Negro Musicians</td>
<td>1930-1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 25</td>
<td>Programs, Performances by Manet Harrison Fowler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 26</td>
<td>Programs, Various Performances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3, f. 27</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings</td>
<td>1930-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 28</td>
<td>Newsletters and other printed material</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 29-32</td>
<td>Genealogical and Historical Research and Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some or all of this material is related to Manet Helen Fowler’s work as consultant for the Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 33</td>
<td>Scrapbook, Student Memories, Manet Helen Fowler</td>
<td>1928-1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4, f. 34</td>
<td>Diploma and certificate, Stephen H. Fowler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6, f. 48</td>
<td>Binder originally housing Mwalimu Festival Chorus phonograph records</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Series IV. Sound Recordings

Box 5 (sound recordings): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 5 (Record album storage), f. 35</td>
<td>“Mwalimu Song,” sung by Mwalimu Festival Chorus, phonograph record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5 (Record album storage), f. 36</td>
<td>“Deep River Thus Saith the Lord,” Accomp. by Manet Harrison Fowler, phonograph record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5 (Record album storage), f. 37</td>
<td>Eva Brown Studio, Manet Fowler on piano, phonograph record</td>
<td>11 June 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5 (Record album storage), f. 38</td>
<td>“A Name to Remember,” William A. Fowler’s Band, phonograph record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5 (Record album storage), f. 39-47</td>
<td>Mwalimu Festival Chorus, phonograph records</td>
<td>31 March 1939</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Series V. Art Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 7, f. 49</td>
<td>“De Ole Ship of Zion,” original oil painting by Manet Harrison Fowler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8, f. 50</td>
<td>“Swing Low Sweet Chariot,” original oil painting by Manet Harrison Fowler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 9, f. 51</td>
<td>“Git on Board,” original oil painting by Manet Harrison Fowler</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
African American music teachers
African American musicians
African American women musicians
African American women teachers
African Americans -- Music
Arts -- Study and teaching
Harlem Renaissance
Music -- New York (State)
Musicians

Genres / Formats
Audiovisual materials
Oil paintings (visual works)
Phonograph records
Photographs
Sound recordings

Occupations
Music teachers

Names
Fowler, Manet Harrison, 1895-1976
Fowler, Manet Helen, b. 1918

Corporate Bodies
Mwalimu Festival Chorus
Mwalimu School (New York, N.Y.)
Tarrant County Black Historical and Genealogical Society
Texas Association of Negro Musicians

Contributors
Fowler, Manet Harrison, 1895-1976
Fowler, Manet Helen, b. 1918