

Guide to the William Pickens Papers

JWJ MSS 125



by Alison Clemens

2014

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
beinecke.library@yale.edu
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

CALL NUMBER: JWJ MSS 125

CREATOR: Pickens, William, 1881-1954

TITLE: William Pickens papers

DATES: 1875-1991

BULK DATES: 1910-1954

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2.29 linear feet (6 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Manuscript and printed works, scrapbooks, ephemera, and realia documenting the career of William Pickens. Writings of Pickens and others on African-American culture, emancipation and civil rights are present, as are scrapbooks, ephemera, and commemorative items documenting Pickens' academic accomplishments, including with Phi Beta Kappa, career as a civil servant in the United States Savings Bonds Program of the Treasury Department, and civil rights activist. Photographs of Pickens' Yale College class and of Pickens at a 1948 reception for W. E. B. Du Bois are also present.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.pickens>

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 <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.pickens>.

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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of William Pickens III, 2001

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The William Pickens 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

William Pickens 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, 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 in 2014.

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. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

Former call number: Uncat MSS 392.

William Pickens

William Pickens (1881-1954, Yale 1904), American educator, essayist, and orator. Pickens was admitted to Phi Beta Kappa upon graduation from Yale and then received a master's degree from Fisk University in 1908 and a Doctor of Letters from Selma University in 1915. Pickens was a field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and he wrote extensively on racial issues.

Scope and Contents

Manuscript and printed works, scrapbooks, ephemera, and realia documenting the career of William Pickens. Writings of Pickens and others on African-American culture, emancipation and civil rights are present, as are scrapbooks, ephemera, and commemorative items documenting Pickens' academic accomplishments, including with Phi Beta Kappa, career as a civil servant in the United States Savings Bonds Program of the Treasury Department, and civil rights activist. Photographs of Pickens' Yale College class and of Pickens at a 1948 reception for W. E. B. Du Bois are also present.

Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Writings, 1899-1991. II. Scrapbooks, Ephemera, and Realia, 1875-1991.

Collection Contents

Series I: Writings, 1899–1991

0.42 linear feet (1 box)

Series I contains manuscript and printed works by William Pickens and others.

Series I is organized into two subseries: Writings by Pickens and Writings by Others.

Writings by Pickens

Arranged alphabetically by title.

b.1	<i>Abraham Lincoln, Man and Statesman</i> printed pamphlets	1910, 1930
b.1	<i>Frederick Douglass and the Spirit of Freedom</i> printed pamphlet	1931–1931
b.1	<i>Fifty Years of Emancipation</i> printed pamphlet	
b.1	<i>The Kind of Democracy the Negro Race Expects</i> printed pamphlet	1918–1918
b.1	<i>The Lowest Struggler in the Struggle for Democracy</i> printed pamphlet	1918–1918
b.1	<i>The Negro in the Great War</i> printed pamphlet	1918–1918
b.1	<i>The Problem of Our Public School</i> printed pamphlet	1914–1914

Writings by Others

Arranged alphabetically by author.

b.1	Barber, J. Max, <i>How They Became Distinguished</i> printed pamphlet	circa 1920
b.1	Davis, John P., <i>The Negro and TVA: Reply to the NAACP</i>	1935–1935
b.1	Motteau, A., <i>Esperanto-English Dictionary</i> , signed by Pickens	1906–1906
b.1	Phi Beta Kappa Associates booklet, with Yale Club newsletter featuring Pickens	1991–1991
b.1	Razaf, Andy and J. Rosamond Johnson, <i>That's Why I Buy Bonds</i> sheet music, inscribed from Razaf to Pickens, with material pertaining to a luncheon in Pickens' honor and a 1942 copy of a speech given by Pickens on communism	1950–1950
b.1	Trico Public Forum proceedings	1936–1936
b.1	Yale College, <i>Memories of 1904 at Yale</i> booklet, signed by Pickens	1913–1913

Series II: Scrapbooks, Ephemera, and Realia, 1875–1991*2.59 linear feet (5 boxes) + 1 broadside, 1 art*

Series II includes materials commemorating the life and career of William Pickens. Scrapbooks document his civic achievements, and ephemera from Yale College, Phi Beta Kappa, and other academic and cultural organizations and events document Pickens' academic and activist career.

Series II is arranged in no particular order.

b. 2	Scrapbooks <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1902-1950
b. 2	Letter book given to Pickens upon his retirement from government service	1950–1950
b. 3	Guest book from the ceremony of the donation of a portrait of Pickens to the Yale Club	1991 April 22
b. 3	Graduation cap from Yale	1904–1904
b. 3	Phi Beta Kappa key	1904–1904
b. 4	Reproduction of the Liberty Bell awarded to Pickens for his participation in the Patriotic Service U. S. Savings Bond Program upon his retirement	1950–1950
b. 4	Coins and buttons For detailed description of the coins and buttons, see the gift inventory in the first box of the collection.	1875–1944
b. 5	Yale College diploma roll container	1904–1904
b. 6 (Oversize)	Yale College diploma	1904–1904
b. 6 (Oversize)	Yale College class photographs	1949–1950
b. 6 (Oversize)	Phi Beta Kappa admission certificate	1945–1945
b. 6 (Oversize)	Esperanto language certificate	1906–1906
b. 6 (Oversize)	Photograph taken at a reception for W. E. B. DuBois	1948–1948
b. 6 (Oversize)	Little Rock, Arkansas public high school diploma	1899–1899

Printed works

Includes mid-20th century editions of the American Blue Book 1919, a Yale College class book of 1904, Who's Who in the East Volume 2, a Phi Beta Kappa Directory 1941, and an Alumni Directory of Yale University 1948.

b.7

Printed works

Contains mid-20th century editions of Who's Who in America Volumes 20 and 28. Includes 250th anniversary Yale publication.

b. 8

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 civil rights workers
African Americans -- Civil rights
Civil rights workers -- United States
Racism -- United States

Geographic Names

United States -- Race relations

Genres / Formats

Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century

Occupations

African American civil rights workers -- United States -- 20th Century
Civil rights workers -- United States -- 20th Century

Corporate Body

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Names

Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963
Pickens, William, 1881-1954