THE CLAUDE A. BARNETT PAPERS: THE ASSOCIATED NEGRO PRESS, 1918-1967

Part Three
Subject Files on Black Americans, 1918-1967

University Publications of America
THE CLAUDE A. BARNETT PAPERS: 
The Associated Negro Press, 1918–1967

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Series A: Agriculture, 1923–1966
Series B: Colleges and Universities, 1918–1966
Series C: Economic Conditions, 1918–1966
Series D: Entertainers, Artists, and Authors, 1928–1965
Series E: Medicine, 1927–1965
Series F: Military, 1925–1965
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Microfilmed from the holdings of the Chicago Historical Society

Edited by
August Meier and Elliott Rudwick
NOTE ON SELECTIONS

Portions of the Claude A. Barnett papers at the Archives and Manuscripts Department of the Chicago Historical Society do not appear in this microfilm edition. The editors chose not to include African and other foreign relations materials and to film only the American categories of the Barnett papers that hold the greatest potential research value. Materials of negligible or specialized research interest that were not microfilmed include some pamphlets, some categories composed entirely of newsclippings, partial sets of minutes of institutions which Barnett served as a board member, a small group of materials that are closed to researchers at present, and routine financial records. Questions about the Barnett papers should be directed to the Archives and Manuscripts Department.

Photographs, primarily dating from the 1940s to the 1960s, also are not included in this microfilm set. They are housed in the Prints and Photographs Department of the Chicago Historical Society.
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Claude A. Barnett founded the Associated Negro Press (ANP) in March 1919 and remained its director through nearly half a century of enormous social change. The ANP was the largest and longest-lived news service to supply black newspapers in the United States with news of interest to black citizens, opinion columns, reviews of books, movies, and records, and occasionally poetry, cartoons, and photographs. The ANP provided its member newspapers with professionally written, detailed coverage of activities within black communities across the country and the latest news about national trends and events. It thereby helped create a national black culture and increased black awareness of national news. It also provided a national forum for black leaders, helped set professional standards of news writing for the black press, aided many small black newspapers to survive, and enabled black journalists to gain reporting experience.

Nearly all of the major black newspapers as well as many of the smaller ones became members of the ANP. In general, over seventy newspapers received ANP news releases, including the Pittsburgh Courier, Norfolk Journal and Guide, Afro American (Baltimore and other cities), New York Age, Amsterdam News (New York City), Houston Informer, Black Dispatch (Oklahoma City), Kansas City Call, Atlanta World, and (briefly) Chicago Defender. Nearly all black newspapers published once a week, and so the ANP was a mail service rather than a wire service.

According to the standard contract, newspapers agreed to pay modest weekly service fees, to print an ANP credit line with each news item from the releases that they published, and to act as a local correspondent for the ANP. In return, class "A" members received two (in later years, three) mailings of ANP news releases every week.

The central staff of the ANP, working out of offices on the South Side of Chicago, compiled the news releases from many sources. They sifted information from the black newspapers and from daily newspapers, from news releases of government agencies, foundations, organizations, and businesses, and from ANP correspondents throughout the country. After 1939, the ANP also maintained a regular staff reporter in Washington, D.C. For background information, the ANP's editors referred to the ANP's morgue containing topical files of clippings from newspapers and from past ANP news releases.

Generally, the ANP followed a middle-of-the-road editorial policy that Barnett hoped would be acceptable to all of the member newspapers. Barnett performed some of the editorial work, usually anonymously, although sometimes he wrote under the penname Albert Anderson. Mostly, however, he relied on the ANP's editors and on Irene Roland, his secretary for nearly thirty years, to handle day-to-day production. Many respected journalists served as editors over the years, including Nahum Daniel Brascher, Percival L. Prattis, Frank Marshall Davis, Charlece Harston, Albert G. Barnett, Luix Virgil Overbea, Zack Weston, James J. Foree, Eddie L. Madison, Enoc Waters, J.H. Randall, and Lee Blackwell.
Much of Barnett's time was spent in routine administration, arranging for local correspondents to cover upcoming news events, cajoling publishers to pay overdue service fees, and promoting advertising. Because the service fees were insufficient to cover operating costs, Barnett always sought ways to supplement the ANP's income. The ANP survived through the early 1930s because Barnett paired it with an advertising exchange. He provided ANP service to newspapers in exchange for "white space," unsold space in their pages. Another company in which Barnett was involved, Associated Publishers' Representative, then sold this space to advertisers. Poro College, a company that Annie M. Turnbo-Malone built into one of the first million-dollar black cosmetics manufacturers, was a major advertising client.

In later years Barnett turned increasingly to private donors and institutional supporters, some known as "associate members" of the ANP, who contributed funds to help sustain the news service. Frances P. Bolton, U.S. Representative from Ohio, became a substantial private donor.

Claude A. Barnett resided most of his life in Chicago, Illinois, although he also traveled extensively. He was born on September 16, 1889 in Sanford, Florida, where his parents, William and Celena Barnett, were living temporarily. His father was a domestic worker who divided his year between Chicago hotels and Southern resorts. His parents' marriage dissolved while Barnett was young, and his mother worked as a housekeeper in the homes of wealthy Chicagoans to support herself and her son. Claude Barnett attended elementary schools in Chicago and in Mattoon, Illinois, where members of his mother's family operated barbershops and worked as chefs and as teachers. Celena Anderson Barnett traced her roots to a small band of free black families who migrated from North Carolina to Lost Creek, Indiana, before the Civil War, and thence to Mattoon, Illinois.

During the years 1902-04, Barnett attended Oak Park High School while working as a houseboy in the home of Richard W. Sears, co-founder of Sears, Roebuck & Company. In September 1904, Celena Barnett sent Claude to Tuskegee Institute to continue his education. At Tuskegee, Barnett finished the advanced course in only two years, but one can scarcely overestimate the influence of Tuskegee on the rest of his life. During his time there, he came to share his mother's admiration for Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee's founder and president, and for the principles he taught: self-help, moderation, respectability, vocational training, and black capitalism. His fellow Tuskegeeans—classmates, staff, and alumni—formed a network of associates that Barnett found congenial and helpful throughout his career.

Returning to Chicago in 1906, Barnett took a job with the post office, where he remained ten years. His duties included sorting the many publications sent through the mail, and he later recalled his experience as a good opportunity to peruse the newspapers and magazines and to develop an eye for effective writing and advertising. After a bout with ill health forced him to leave the post office in 1916, Barnett tried his hand at several ventures. He set up his own advertising agency (C.A. Barnett Advertising: "I Reach the Negro.") and helped organize the Kashmir Chemical Company, manufacturer of Nile Queen cosmetics. In a few years the cosmetics company folded, but by then he had established the Associated Negro Press.

The ANP placed Claude A. Barnett at the center of a national information network, introduced him to black leaders throughout the country, and made him a valuable ally to those who sought to shape modern black life. During the 1920s, Barnett was active in Republican politics, eventually serving as secretary of the publicity committee of the Colored Voters Division of the Republican National Committee during Herbert Hoover's 1928 presidential campaign. Barnett's acquaintance with President Hoover began earlier: in 1925-26 while Hoover was Secretary of Commerce, Barnett persuaded him to create a government position for a black man as adviser to small businesses. In 1927 Barnett served on the blue-ribbon committee chaired by President Robert R. Moton of Tuskegee Institute and appointed by Secretary Hoover to inspect the distribution of Red Cross aid to black victims of Southern floods. Also in the 1920s, Barnett participated in the fact-finding conferences of black leaders held at North Carolina College at Durham.
In 1932 Barnett and another black man became the first graduates of Tuskegee Institute to be elected to its board of trustees. He served in this position for over thirty years. With Albon Holsey, a Tuskegee Institute administrator who was also executive secretary of the National Negro Business League, Barnett worked to convince national advertisers of the importance of the Negro market. He also assisted the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges in drawing the attention of the Democratic administration in Washington to the needs of black colleges. From 1942 to 1952, Barnett and President F.D. Patterson of Tuskegee Institute served as special assistants to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, advising the U.S.D.A. on the effectiveness of federal programs relating to black farmers. When Patterson took the lead in organizing the United Negro College Fund, Barnett loyalty supported him in alumni relations and fund drives.

Meanwhile, in Chicago, Claude A. Barnett served as president of the board of Provident Hospital during the 1930s and became a director of the Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company. He was also one of the principal organizers of the American Negro Exposition, held in the summer of 1940.

In 1934 Barnett married Etta Moten, a well-known concert singer and actress. They reared her three daughters from a previous marriage, Sue, Etta Vee, and Gladys. Mrs. Barnett's career became another factor in Barnett's many travels and promotions, although it soon outgrew his ability to manage it on a part-time basis. In the 1930s and 1940s Etta Moten Barnett made annual concert tours, primarily through the South and Midwest where her appearances were sponsored by black colleges, churches, and other organizations. For several months in 1942, the Barnetts lived in New York while Mrs. Barnett sang the lead in Porgy and Bess on Broadway.

During the 1940s Barnett used the ANP to press for an end to segregation in the armed forces, served on a Red Cross committee opposed to racial segregation of blood donors, and later was appointed to the national board of governors of the Red Cross. He also advised the Harmon Foundation on a traveling exhibition of portraits of prominent black Americans and on an exhibition of African art.

Claude and Etta Barnett made their first trip to Africa in 1947, traveling under the auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Barnett's primary purpose was to inspect Booker T. Washington Institute in Kakata, Liberia, which had been founded with the aid of consultants from Tuskegee Institute and partially funded by the Phelps-Stokes Fund. Barnett toured extensively on the African continent during this visit and made many more trips to Africa over the next two decades. Fascinated by African culture in general, his interest focused on Liberia, where he became well acquainted with President William V.S. Tubman, other government officials, American diplomats, and businessmen. He served as a board member of Booker T. Washington Institute, of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and of The Liberia Company, Inc. Between 1961 and 1963, Barnett also operated a World News Service that sent news releases prepared in the ANP's Chicago office to over one hundred African newspapers.

The Associated Negro Press began to lose membership in the 1950s, although still serving about fifty newspapers. As the civil rights movement developed, major American daily newspapers increased their coverage of the black community. Some of the more prosperous black newspapers joined a national wire service, and a few began to publish daily. But the ANP remained a weekly mail service. The National Newspaper Publishers Association set up a rival news service. However, despite the forces reshaping the press, the ANP remained remarkably strong as long as it could draw on Barnett's experience and contacts. In 1963 Ebony magazine ranked him among the one hundred most influential black Americans.

When declining health persuaded Barnett to retire in July 1964, the Associated Negro Press closed its doors. He began writing an autobiography, but a series of strokes ended this effort, and Claude A. Barnett died in Chicago on August 2, 1967.

Linda J. Evans
Associate Curator
Chicago Historical Society
DESCRIPTION
Part III: Subject Files on Black Americans, 1918–1967

These papers describe the world of black America at the height of its separate development: after the urban migration of the early twentieth century produced sufficient concentrations of population and other resources to support it and before integration changed it. The common link in the generation of these materials was Claude A. Barnett's extraordinary range of overlapping and interconnected interests and activities, including operation of the Associated Negro Press; service as Special Assistant to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and as an informal adviser to other policy makers; participation in Republican party campaigns, the National Negro Business League, and the United Negro College Fund; and membership on the governing boards of Tuskegee Institute, Provident Hospital (Chicago), Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company, Phelps-Stokes Fund, the American Negro Exposition (Chicago 1940), and the American National Red Cross. Materials reflect the many roles that Barnett played as journalist and news distributor, as adviser and confidante, as administrator and consultant, as promoter and critic, as family man and friend.

This microfilm set contains most of the materials found in eleven series of the Claude A. Barnett papers. They are organized by subject. The series begin with General Files that relate broadly to the subject of the series. These usually contain correspondence, memos, reports, clippings (from newspapers and from news releases of the ANP and of other organizations), and a few pamphlets. They are followed by specific Topical Files that usually also contain correspondence and clippings. The Topical Files include many stories clipped from ANP news releases and filed by topic; however, there is no guarantee that they contain all ANP stories on a given topic. Materials from the years before 1928 are rare, but later files seem to have survived intact. Often a letterhead or an address determines where an item is filed: for example, letters with the letterhead of Fisk University are generally found in the Fisk University folders.

Series A: Agriculture, 1923-1966

This series documents efforts to improve the lives of the black, rural, primarily southern population. The General Files contain correspondence with black and white officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A), Department of Interior, Extension Service, and various other federal agencies—in Washington, D.C., and in local offices throughout the U.S.—who dealt with this constituency. Subjects include job appointments for blacks; race relations within government agencies and in rural communities; access for blacks to federal programs for adult education, health, crop insurance, farm loans, etc.; home economists; 4-H Clubs; farmers' organizations; and migrant labor. Barnett's letters from his service as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture (1942-52) are filed here, but related correspondence is found in Series B under the category "Tuskegee Institute." Extension agents are represented both in the General Files and, occasionally, in the Topical Files under the name of the college that sponsored them.

Topical Files include correspondence of Thomas M. Campbell, the U.S.D.A. Field Agent stationed at Tuskegee Institute, and of James P. ("Jim Perry") Davis, an agriculture official in Little Rock who shared Barnett's national political interests and contributed news stories to the ANP.

The category "Negro Land Grant Colleges" is divided into general correspondence, which relates to most of the colleges, and separate files for each school. Much of the general correspondence concerns government agencies and the Conference of Presidents of Negro Land Grant Colleges (a group which included the black, southern, state agricultural colleges as well as Tuskegee Institute, Hampton Institute, and Wilberforce College as associate members). The separate files on the Negro land grant colleges in each southern state sometimes also contain items relating to the southern, state-supported, black colleges (such as the state normal schools). Most correspondence with administrators, faculty, and students is arranged in these college files although some correspondence of the presidents is found with the general correspondence of the Conference of Presidents.

Series B: Colleges and Universities, 1918-1966

Series B contains correspondence and clippings relating to administrators, faculty, students, and alumni of institutions of higher learning. Correspondence with Barnett discusses news coverage, federal government programs and funding, studies of black life and other faculty achievements, job appointments, and occasionally, national politics.

The General Files contain miscellaneous items relating to colleges—black and white—for which there are no other file categories in the Barnett papers. Also present are files on academic honors won by blacks, on the concept of southern regional education and its relation to segregation, and on the United Negro College Fund.

The Topical Files contain files arranged alphabetically on black colleges and on universities with significant black programs. The largest portion of this material concerns Tuskegee Institute, which Barnett served as a member of the board of trustees from 1932 to 1965. Barnett also maintained strong ties to President Mordecai Johnson of Howard University (who shared his interest in national politics), Dr. Numa P.G. Adams of Howard University Medical School, President Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University (who wrote a regular column for the ANP), President Albert W. Dent of Dillard University, and President James E. Shepard of North Carolina College at Durham (sponsor of the Fact Finding Conferences). The texts of papers presented by prominent blacks at the Durham Fact Finding Conferences of the late 1920s give an overview of such topics as politics, hospitals, religion, and the press.
The Tuskegee Institute general correspondence consists of correspondence with Presidents Robert R. Moton, F.D. Patterson, and Luther L. Foster, and various other administrators and faculty. Subjects include Tuskegee operations, relations with charitable foundations, the Alabama State government, federal government agencies, white neighbors in the town of Tuskegee, and state and national politicians. Patterson's correspondence after June 1953, when he became director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, is found in Series G.

The Tuskegee Institute Topical Files show the ANP's involvement in a proposal to found an agriculture newspaper and in the production of Service magazine. They also relate to Chicago alumni interests, including the aviator John C. Robinson (whose exploits in Ethiopia were publicized by the ANP and by James C. Boyack), discuss Southland Manufacturing Company's exemption from N.R.A. regulations, and include correspondence of Tuskegee administrators Lucien Green (Barnett's cousin) and Albon Holsey (a friend of Barnett). Holsey's letters are particularly extensive and deal with Tuskegee, politics, the U.S.D.A. and other government agencies, and the National Negro Business League. The "Hospitals" category concerns federal government-supported hospitals elsewhere as well as the Veterans Administration hospital at Tuskegee.

Series C: Economic Conditions, 1918-1966

Materials in Series C relate to companies, business organizations, labor unions, federal and state governments, and American economic conditions in general. Correspondence discusses newsgathering for the ANP, black business development, and jobs and training for black workers. Large groups of materials relate to beauty products companies, insurance companies, the National Negro Business League (N.N.B.L.), railroad companies and workers, unions, and U.S. government offices, particularly the Department of Commerce and the Department of Labor.

Correspondence of the cosmetics companies often refers to Barnett's advertising business (the files of which are located in Part II of this microfilm edition with other materials about advertising and public relations). Barnett was a partner in Kashmir Chemical Company, manufacturer of Nile Queen cosmetics. The series also contains significant materials about Poro College, founded by Annie M. Turnbo-Malone, for whom Barnett handled a great deal of advertising.

Correspondence with officials of insurance companies concerns advertising, news, company policies, personnel, and financial achievements. Occasionally other interests that Barnett shared with these men are discussed, such as membership in fraternal societies and in the N.N.B.L.

Files of the National Negro Business League include correspondence with Albon Holsey, the long-time executive secretary of the N.N.B.L., about the routine operations of the organization, the C.M.A. stores (a cooperative purchasing association for grocers in the late 1920s), home economists, studies of the Negro market, and efforts to promote advertising. Correspondence of newspaper publishers who were N.N.B.L. members is found in Part II of this microfilm edition. Additional correspondence of Albon Holsey is located in Series B under the category "Tuskegee Institute."

The U.S. government general correspondence includes newsgathering efforts by Barnett during the 1930s to determine how aid and jobs were being distributed to blacks. Correspondence with the Commerce Department and the Census Bureau largely concerns the gathering and analysis of statistics about black Americans as part of Barnett's ongoing interest in documenting achievements of black Americans and in persuading national advertisers that blacks were a significant consumer audience.
Series D: Entertainers, Artists, and Authors, 1928-1965

Series D contains correspondence between Barnett and entertainers, artists, architects, authors, press agents, managers, ANP reporters on entertainment, publishers, producers, directors, theater owners, broadcasters, and executives of radio stations, recording companies, broadcasting networks, and motion picture studios. Two subjects frequently overlap: newsgathering for the ANP and Barnett's interest in career opportunities for black people in the arts. Otherwise, the materials are disparate. ANP news releases designed for use by radio stations, 1957-58, are found in Part I of this microfilm edition.

This series includes some letters by and to Etta Moten Barnett, the wife of Claude A. Barnett. Her career as a singer, actress, and lecturer, performing in motion pictures, concert tours, radio, television, and Broadway (Porgy and Bess), introduced her to many of the people whose correspondence is filed in this series. Because Claude Barnett promoted her career, some of her correspondence is found among his office files. However, the major portion of her correspondence is located in the Etta Moten Barnett papers at the Chicago Historical Society and is not a part of this microfilm edition.

Significant portions of this series pertain to the ANP, including its reporters who covered the Hollywood scene (Fay Jackson, Harry Levette, and Calla Scrivner); writers whose pieces appeared in the ANP (Langston Hughes, Eslanda Robeson, Carl Diton, and Andy Razaf); and E.M. Glucksman, whose All-American Newsreels company produced ANP newsreels shown in black motion picture theaters.

Generally, materials relating to creative writers appear in this series, but correspondence with authors of non-fiction works on the black experience usually are filed in Series I: Race Relations or under the name of the college where they taught.

Series E: Medicine, 1927-1965

Series E concerns the medical professions, hospitals, and health care in general, the U.S. Public Health Service, and foundations for the research and treatment of disease. Two large groups of materials relate to Provident Hospital (Chicago) and to the Red Cross.

Provident Hospital correspondence from the period when Barnett served as a member (1931-42) and president (1939-41) of its board of trustees concerns the quality of health care, accreditation of the hospital, staff training, segregation of hospital services in Chicago, insurance, fund-raising, and the budget.

The Red Cross general correspondence and Chicago Branch correspondence concern various committees on which Barnett served as well as routine newsgathering for the ANP. Extensive materials on the Flood Relief Advisory Committee detail the committee's investigation of charges of racial discrimination in the distribution of aid to victims of the great Mississippi River flood of 1927. Barnett's correspondence with Jesse O. Thomas relates to his work with the Urban League, the Red Cross, and the U.S. Treasury Department.

Additional material on physicians, nurses, and hospitals is located in Series B, especially under the category "Hospitals of Tuskegee Inst., Veterans Administration, & other U.S. government hospitals."

Series F: Military, 1925-1965

The General Files of this series chiefly contain correspondence between Claude A. Barnett and white and black personnel of the U.S. armed forces, civilian employees of the U.S. Defense (War) Department, and other persons involved with issues of: racial discrimination and segregation within the U.S. armed forces; wartime press censorship; recruitment policy and the draft; promotions, honors, medals, and "firsts" achieved by blacks in the armed forces; the development of Tuskegee flying field into a training base for the first all-black Army Air Corps units during World War II;
hiring and training of civilian war workers in private industry; and relations with the local population wherever black troops were stationed. Correspondence with ANP war correspondents and other service men who sent news items to the ANP over the years is included in the General Files.

The folders entitled "Assistant Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War" contain Barnett's correspondence with three black men who held that post: William Hastie, Truman K. Gibson, Jr., and Robert Marcus. Barnett and Gibson—both Chicagoans—had served together on the governing board of the American Negro Exposition in 1940, and both were associated with the Supreme Liberty Insurance Company. Their wartime correspondence shows each expressing the special interests of his position: Barnett requesting more information on racial incidents and Gibson emphasizing the importance of responsible news coverage that would not inflame public opinion.

In general, subjects that are represented only by newscloppings in the Topical Files are discussed in scattered correspondence in the General Files and in the correspondence of the Assistant Civilian Aide.

Additional material on the Tuskegee airmen is found in Series B in the "Tuskegee" categories. The "Hospitals" category under Tuskegee Institute also contains materials on Veterans Administration and U.S. military hospitals, including the one at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. In Part II of this microfilm edition, the correspondence of the ANP's Washington, D.C., reporters during World War II (Alvin White and Ernest Johnson) discusses government and military news and policy makers.

Series G: Philanthropic and Social Organizations, 1925-1966

Materials pertaining to philanthropic foundations and to black social organizations that sponsored social service programs are arranged in Series G. Much of the correspondence involves routine ANP coverage of their conventions, conferences, grants, social activities, scholarship awards, and service programs. However, Barnett participated more directly in some of these organizations.

As a trustee of Tuskegee Institute, Barnett discussed various grant proposals for the school with Jackson Davis, assistant director of the General Education Board, and with Edwin Embree, president of the Rosenwald Fund. In addition, their correspondence ranged over a variety of racial issues. Davis recognized Barnett's interest in African affairs and, in 1943, nominated him to the board of trustees of Booker T. Washington Institute, located in Kakata, Liberia. Three years later Barnett joined the board of trustees of the Phelps-Stokes Fund and of the New York State Colonization Society as well.

The Phelps-Stokes Fund provides scholarships for Africans to study in the United States and sponsors programs to improve race relations in the U.S. During World War II, Barnett had served on the Fund's Committee on Africa and Peace Aims. After he joined the board of trustees, he began to correspond extensively with Dr. Channing H. Tobias, director of the Fund, Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, L.A. Roy, and Dr. F.D. Patterson (former president of Tuskegee Institute), who succeeded Tobias as director in 1953. In 1947, the Phelps-Stokes Fund sponsored Barnett's first trip to Africa.

Barnett's African interests appear also in his correspondence with Mary Brady, the executive secretary of the Harmon Foundation. He advised her on a traveling exhibit of portraits of outstanding black Americans and on an exhibition of African art in New York in the late 1940s. Other organizations in which Barnett was interested personally include Alpha Phi Alpha, a fraternity of black professional and business men, which Barnett joined in 1950, and the Knights of Pythias, run by Barnett's uncle (by marriage), S.W. Green.

Materials from and about women's organizations make up a large portion of Series G. Correspondence refers to the activities of many prominent black women who belonged to these groups (Etta Moten Barnett was a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha)
as well as to the social welfare programs that they sponsored. Correspondence with
and about Mary McLeod Bethune is filed under the National Council of Negro
Women and includes items about Bethune-Cookman College and the National
Youth Administration.

Series H: Politics and Law, 1920-1965

The General Files of this series contain correspondence, memos, reports, and
lists pertaining to national political campaigns, issues, legislation, appointees, presi-
dents, senators, representatives, and judges. Correspondents include office holders
and candidates for national offices, their staff members, campaign organizers and
volunteers throughout the country, supporters, and critics. Much of the material
concerns black participation in the Republican party although Democratic party
materials become more common over the years, particularly in the 1940s.

Barnett worked in every Republican presidential campaign from 1920 to 1932 and
continued to maintain ties with his cohorts from those years. Materials relating to
1928 are especially extensive because Barnett moved to Washington, D.C., during
the campaign to serve as secretary of the Publicity Committee of the Colored Voters
Division of the Republican National Committee. While in Washington, he corre-
responded regularly with P.L. Prattis and R. Irving Johnson of the ANP's Chicago
office. Most of these letters are filed with Prattis's correspondence in Part II of this
microfilm edition, and a few are located in the Illinois political correspondence. Prat-
tis and Johnson were doing publicity work for the Chicago Democratic organization
at the same time. Press releases issued for the Republican 1932 campaign by one of
Barnett's companies, the National Feature Service, are found in Part I of this micro-
film edition (after the ANP news releases).

The Topical Files contain materials on the courts, attorneys, and the National Bar
Association; extensive files on the Scottsboro (Alabama) Case, 1931-36, which John
L. Spivak covered for the ANP; publications of the Republican party and of the
Democratic party; and correspondence, news releases, and publications of several
left political groups and parties.

The last section concerns black participation in government and politics, primar-
ily on the state and local levels, including such subjects as black appointed and
elected officials of state and local governments, voter registration, poll taxes, jury
duty, and election analyses. The general correspondence is diverse. Other files con-
tain correspondence with the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds (traditionally,
a black patronage appointee); Clinton P. Anderson, a former Secretary of Agricul-
ture whom Barnett supported in his senatorial campaign; Judge Irvin Mollison of
Chicago and New York City; Lethia Fleming, an Ohioan who was a leader in Repub-
lican women's activities; and Raymond and Sadie Alexander of Philadelphia. The
Illinois and Indiana categories are very diverse, including correspondence with and
about local politicians, government workers, and the general citizenry. A large por-
tion of the Illinois files relates to Chicago politics, neighborhoods and housing,
courts, transportation, and other city and county issues. Some of it concerns the
Douglas neighborhood of Chicago, where Barnett resided and owned rental proper-
ties.

Additional correspondence relating to national politics is found in the Tuskegee
Institute general correspondence and the Albon Holsey correspondence in Series B.
The correspondence of the ANP's Washington, D.C., reporters located in Part II of
this microfilm edition is relevant also.

Series I: Race Relations, 1923-1965

This series contains materials relating to racial concepts and interracial prob-
lems. Whereas other series of the Barnett papers contain files on particular race
relations issues affecting such institutions as the Methodist Church or Provident
Hospital, this series deals with broader subjects—segregation, the study of black history, civil rights—and with race relations organizations.

A major portion of the files pertains to black history (primarily Afro-American history) and efforts to assess the achievements of black people in the United States, to promote self-pride, to publicize their accomplishments before a wider audience, and to record and interpret their struggles. Extensive files concern the American Negro Exposition held in Chicago in the summer of 1940. Known formally as the Diamond Jubilee Exposition, it publicized the achievements of black Americans since emancipation. Barnett helped organize the exhibits and programs on the black press, agriculture, the postal service, art, and theater.

Materials on racial concepts and legal definitions of the term "Negro" are present in this series, including some references to the gradual acceptance of the term "Negro" in standard English usage (although most comments pertaining to publishers and the use of racial labels are found in Part II of this microfilm edition).

The NAACP and the Urban League are both represented by extensive files in this series. Barnett corresponded with Walter White, Roy Wilkins, and other national officers of the NAACP as well as local leaders in several parts of the country, including Leslie Perry in Washington, D.C., and Herbert L. LaGrone in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Subjects range from Barnett's occasional clashes with the NAACP over his moderate stance on racial issues to his cooperation in the 1930s drive to persuade Congress to pass an anti-lynching bill.

Materials on W.E.B. Du Bois, Charles Houston, and William Pickens are arranged separately in this section. These files concern not only their NAACP activities but also other roles that they played: Du Bois's achievements as an historian and his later activities in Africa, Houston's law career and involvement in Howard University affairs, and Pickens's role as an ANP columnist and his later career with the U.S. Treasury Department.

With the Urban League, the correspondence again ranges from national leaders like Eugene Kinkle Jones to materials concerning local chapters, especially the Chicago Urban League, where Mr. and Mrs. Barnett served on various committees.

Series J: Religion, 1924–1966

Series J contains correspondence and other materials with and about religious leaders and church members. Subjects discussed in Series J range from routine ANP coverage of church activities to policy statements on segregation and struggles for leadership within black churches. The series also contains most of the Barnett papers relating to foreign missionaries, in Africa and elsewhere. Most of the material is filed by denomination, arranged alphabetically. Two short sections containing interdenominational organizations and non-denominational (evangelical) churches and ministers precede the materials filed by denomination.

The quantity and depth of materials varies greatly from denomination to denomination. Barnett had little contact with denominations that included few black members but carried on lengthy correspondence with Baptists, particularly officers of the National Baptist Conventions, and with Methodists, particularly the bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Significant subjects include reactions of Methodist Church clergymen and lay leaders to the proposed church merger of the 1930s; dispute over the reelection of the Reverend J.H. Jackson to the presidency of the National Baptist Convention in the 1950s; Dean Gordon Hancock of Virginia Union University, who wrote an opinion column for the ANP for over twenty years; and Bishops Richard R. Wright, Jr., and Frederick D. Jordan of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Small amounts of correspondence with other denominations include two ministers whom Barnett probably met while they lived in Chicago, the Reverend Owen A. Troy (Seventh Day Adventist) and the Reverend Harold Kingsley.
(Congregationalist). After they moved to California, they corresponded with Barnett about local conditions and church practices.

Series J includes correspondence with several clergymen who published or edited newspapers (some of which were ANP members), including the Charleston Messenger (South Carolina) in reel 2 (0001); the Nashville Globe, the Nashville Independent, and the Nashville Sun in reel 3 (0488); the Nashville Defender in reel 7 (0167); and the Kansas City Plaindealer (Kansas) in reel 9 (0356). In addition, some churches or other religious organizations held associate membership in the ANP which entitled them to print items from ANP news releases in their house publications.

Materials about many church-supported colleges are filed by denomination in this series. Although materials on a few more church-affiliated colleges are located in Series B: Colleges and Universities, those files seldom refer to the churches.

A few of the ministers whose correspondence is filed in Series J spoke frequently on radio evangelical programs. Materials in Series D relate to two more radio series: "Radio Church of God," by Elder Solomon Lightfoot Michaux, and "Wings Over Jordan," by the Reverend Glenn T. Settle.

Very little material concerning the personal religious beliefs and practices of members of the Barnett family appears in the series, although Mr. and Mrs. Barnett attended St. Mary's A.M.E. Church in Chicago for many years. Mrs. Barnett's father was the Reverend F.F. Moten of the A.M.E. Church (Kansas). Most items relating to Talladega College (Alabama), the alma mater of Mrs. Barnett and of her daughters Sue and Etta Vee, are filed in the A.M.E. Church general correspondence.


This series includes some of Barnett's personal correspondence with family and friends: drafts of many speeches, non-ANP articles, and reports that he wrote on various topics; and his unfinished autobiography and other biographical notes and newscippings. Much of Claude A. Barnett's correspondence with and about his many aunts, uncles, and cousins is located here, although additional materials are scattered throughout the Barnett papers. His correspondence with his wife is located in the Etta Moten Barnett papers and is not a part of this microfilm edition.

Barnett's articles, speeches, and reports are invaluable resources for understanding the public image that he projected. They focus especially on the role of the black press, the mission of Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington Institute in Liberia, goals of the Negro land grant colleges, Alpha Phi Alpha and the type of leadership produced by the black community, the growth of black capitalism and pride in black culture, and recognition of African heritage and support for the developing nations of Africa. The texts of other speeches by Barnett are filed by topic in other series of the Barnett papers.

Barnett's autobiography, tentatively entitled "Fly Out of Darkness," reveals his attitudes late in his life and includes many details on the early years of his career that are not recorded anywhere else. He wrote it after he retired from the ANP in July 1964 but completed only the outline and five typescript chapters.

Linda J. Evans
Associate Curator
Chicago Historical Society
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- 0717 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, August-September 1940. Box 214, Folder 7. 137pp.
- 0854 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, October-December 1940. Box 215, Folder 1. 93pp.

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- 0001 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, March-September 1941. Box 215, Folder 2. 133pp.
- 0134 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, October 1941-February 1942. Box 215, Folder 3. 128pp.
- 0708 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, December 1942. Box 215, Folder 7. 147pp.

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- 0971 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, February-June 1945. Box 217, Folder 1. 216pp.
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0426 General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, April-September 1946. Box 217, Folder 4. 196pp.
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0847  Negro Land Grant Colleges: General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1940-1941. Box 225, Folder 5. 136pp.

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0001  Negro Land Grant Colleges: General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1942-1944. Box 226, Folder 1. 164pp.
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0318  Black Colleges and Universities with Significant Black Programs: Jackson College (Mississippi), 1942-1957. Box 236, Folder 3. 115pp.

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0351  Black Colleges and Universities with Significant Black Programs: Jackson College (Mississippi), 1942-1957. Box 236, Folder 3. 115pp.

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0074  Black Colleges and Universities with Significant Black Programs: North Carolina College (Durham)—Shepard, Dr. James E. 1927-1942. Box 237, Folder 1. 209pp.


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0572  Black Colleges and Universities with Significant Black Programs: Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, Alabama)—Hospitals of Tuskegee Institute, Veterans Administration, and Other U.S. Government Hospitals: Correspondence. 1940-1945. Box 253, Folder 5. 128pp.
1002  Black Colleges and Universities with Significant Black Programs: Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, Alabama)—Hospitals of Tuskegee Institute, Veterans Administration, and Other U.S. Government Hospitals: Newsclippings, News Releases, Reports, and Pamphlets. Box 254, Folder 2. 82pp.
1083  Black Colleges and Universities with Significant Black Programs: Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, Alabama)—Imes, Dr. G. Lake (Baltimore, Maryland), 1933-1956. Box 254, Folder 3. 39pp.

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- **0421** Illinois and Indiana: General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1931-1943. Box 260, Folder 4. 96pp.

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- **0116** Beauty Culture: General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1925-1957. 1962, and 1966. Box 261, Folder 6. 120pp.
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0150  Beauty Culture: Poro College (St. Louis and Chicago)—Stone, Charles (St. Louis and Veterans Administration Hospital), 1928-1951. Box 263, Folder 1. 61pp.

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0466 Authors (Fiction, Poetry, Plays, etc.): General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1934-1963. Box 288, Folder 5. 104pp.
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0593  Red Cross: General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1942. Box 308, Folder 6. 205pp.
0798  Red Cross: General and Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1943–1944. Box 308, Folder 7. 119pp.

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