

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Charles White Archive at Swann Galleries Paints a Picture of the Artist's Life in Pasadena, CA



New York–Swann Galleries will offer an auction of **Printed & Manuscript African Americana** on **Thursday, March 28**, featuring documents, letters, photographs and publications illuminating African-American history, from slavery and abolition to the civil rights movement and beyond.

A highlight of the sale is remarkable archive of 28 letters and 68 photographs from artist **Charles White** and Frances, his wife, to Melvin and Lorraine Williamson. The correspondences reflect the Whites' lives in Pasadena, CA, shortly after they moved there in 1956 and continue through mid-1960. Most of the letters discuss Charles' artwork—shipping works from ACA Galleries in New York, new work he has been creating, and an upcoming exhibition at Pacific Town Club in LA. Discussion of the Whites' notable inner-circle includes Sidney Poitier and Lorraine Hansberry, with Charles wishing success for the duo and Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Mentions of politics also fill the pages, with Charles noting, "...Rev. King on the cover of *Times Magazine* ... I never felt so excited and enthusiastic about just being alive. And I think this feeling is being carried over into my work." Photographs from the archive depict the couple's new suburban life in Pasadena, as well as White's studio and new works. The archive is expected to bring \$4,000 to \$6,000.

Also from the Melvin and Lorraine Williamson family comes Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, the first play by an African-American woman and African-American director on Broadway, on the block at \$3,000 to \$4,000. The draft, signed "Lorraine's Copy" (which Lorraine it refers to is unclear), and with manuscript notes throughout, comes from early in the script's production—either late 1958 or early 1959—as the copyright date of 1959 has not yet been added, and permission for the title from

Langston Hughes was still pending. Other literary works of note include a first edition of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, London, 1773, with an estimate of \$15,000 to \$25,000, and a possibly unpublished and nearly lost radio play, *The Man Who Went To War*, 1944, by Langston Hughes at \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The top lot is a substantial archive of 164 correspondence to John Augustine Washington III relating to Mount Vernon, other Washington family estates, the heirs of America's Founding Father, and most often discussing the enslaved people on whom their fortune was built (\$20,000-30,000). Also of note is a document signed from Newport, R.I. that records the illegal act of an American captain agreeing to bring slaves from Africa to Havana in 1806. The Slave Trade Act of 1794 banned American merchants from engaging in the international slave trade, but the law was poorly enforced, especially in Rhode Island which was the main center of the trade (\$4,000-6,000).

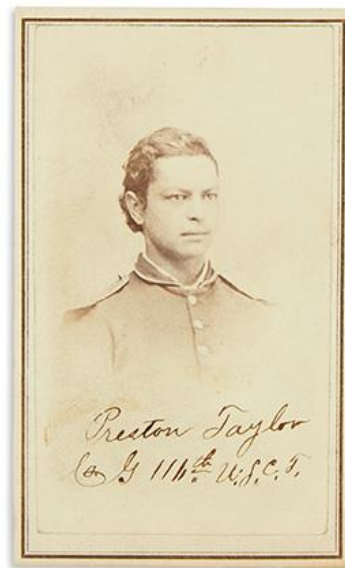
Material relating to David Ruggles, one of the leading abolitionists in New York, includes the *First Annual Report of the New York Committee of Vigilance*, New York, 1837, estimated at \$3,000 to \$4,000. Ruggles helped form the committee in order to aid fugitive slaves and protect the city's free black community from kidnapping, which made the city a major hub of the Underground Railroad. Volume one, number one, of the first black periodical published in the United States, *The Mirror of Liberty*, July 1838, of which Ruggles was the editor, makes its auction debut at \$8,000 to \$12,000.

Civil War lots feature an 1864 autograph letter signed by Penrose Edminson, a soldier in the 25th United States Colored Troops, to his mother in which he notes, "We whipped the rebles [sic] 3 times and we will whip them tonight again" (\$4,000-6,000), and a late-1866 signed albumen carte-de-viste of **Preston Taylor** as a drummer with the 116th U.S.C.T. Taylor would go on to found the short-lived Christian Bible College in New Castle, KY, which moved to Nashville, TN in 1882. He became a leader of Nashville's African-American community, eventually playing a major role in the founding of Tennessee State University (\$2,500-3,500.)

A unique diary of a young Seattle woman, LeEtta Sanders, captures a snapshot of her life during 1915. Sanders was a Washington native, whose life seems to have been contained within a community of middle-class and professional African-Americans. The diary contains much of what one would expect from a 21-year-old woman mentioning matters of the heart and her day-to-day life, even describing herself as "just a flirt." The diary carries an estimate of \$2,000 to \$3,000.

The sale is closed out by an archive of Sister Makinya Sibeko-Kouate dating from 1940-1975. Sibeko-Kouate brought the first Kwanzaa celebrations to the Bay Area and went on to become of the holiday's leading populizers, traveling to numerous states and African nations. In 2015 she was named Queen Mother of Kwanzaa (\$6,000-9,000).

Exhibition opening in New York City March 23. The complete catalogue and bidding information is available at www.swanngalleries.com and on the Swann Galleries app.



Additional highlights can be found [here](#).

Captions:

Lot 124: An archive of letters from artist Charles White and his wife Frances, 28 letters with 65 photographs & slides, Pasadena, CA, 1956-60. Estimate \$4,000 to \$6,000.

Lot 326: Albumen carte-de-viste of Preston Taylor as a drummer with the 116th United States Colored Troops, New Orleans, LA, circa late 1866. Estimate \$2,500 to \$3,500.

Auction date: Thursday, March 28, at 1:30 pm

Exhibition dates: March 23, 12-5; March 25 to 27, 10-6; March 28, 10-12

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