



Mary McLeod Bethune Draft Statements

Collection Number: S0079

Collection Title: Mary McLeod Bethune Draft Statements

Dates: 1945

Creator: Bethune, Mary McLeod, 1875-1955

Abstract: This collection consists of typescript drafts of statements Bethune wrote near the end of World War II for an unspecified conference of African American organizations. In the statements, Bethune demands “the eradication of all handicaps upon African American’s political, social, and economic life.”

Collection Size: 0.01 cubic foot
(1 folder)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Mary McLeod Bethune Draft Statements (S0079)*; The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the University of Missouri by Charles Hamaker on December 2, 1981 (Accession No. SA2439).

Processed by: Processed by Jean Streeter, February 1981; revised by AJ Medlock and Amy Stahl, March 2023.

Biographical Note:

Mary McLeod Bethune was born to Samuel and Patsy McLeod on July 10, 1875, in Marysville, South Carolina. In 1894, she graduated from Scotia Seminary, a boarding school in North Carolina, followed by Dwight Moody's Institute for Home and Foreign Missions in Chicago, Illinois. Unable to find a congregation to support her missionary work, McLeod transitioned to education and moved back to South Carolina, where she married Albertus Bethune in 1899; they had one son, Albert Bethune. By 1904, she had dissolved her marriage to her husband and moved to Florida with her son to open the Daytona Beach Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls, which later merged with the Cookman Institute to become the Bethune-Cookman College in 1929. During the 1930s, she became friends with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, leading President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to name her director of "Negro Affairs" for the National Youth Administration, a position she retained until 1944. Bethune's other political activities included serving as Vice President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP). Mary McLeod Bethune died in Daytona Beach, Florida, on May 18, 1955.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into one folder chronologically.

Scope and Content:

The statements in this collection contain carbon and mimeograph copy drafts, handwritten notes, and Bethune's mimeographed statement. Bethune wrote the draft prior to the Allied Forces' victory over Japan but after their victory in the European Theater in World War II. In the statements, Bethune urged strengthened unity among African American organizations in confronting post-war problems, employment, poll taxes, economic reconversion, returning veterans, housing shortages, and the need for a Fair Employment Practice Commission and the potential return to "normalcy" in race relations that threatened to erase Black progress during World War II. Bethune argued that world peace, unity, freedom, and democracy could not be achieved until those principles were realized for all American citizens. The materials in this collection were written in 1945 and are maintained in their original order.

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