



Smithsonian  
*Anacostia Community Museum*

Alice Bell Finlayson papers,  
1901-1992, bulk 1938-1972

Vuanya T. Cyrus

2009-07-01

Anacostia Community Museum Archives  
1901 Fort Place, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20020  
ACMArchives@si.edu  
<http://www.anacostia.si.edu/Collections/ArchiveCollection>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Anacostia Community Museum Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Alice Bell Finlayson papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	ACMA.06-003
<b>Date:</b>	1901-1992 (bulk 1938-1972)
<b>Extent:</b>	5.16 Linear feet (7 boxes)
<b>Creator:</b>	Finlayson, Alice Bell
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Alice Bell Finlayson papers, which date from 1901 to 1990 and measure 5.16 linear feet, document the career of educator, community organizer, and journalist Alice Bell Finlayson. The papers are comprised of books, correspondence, curriculum vitae, documents from community organizations, journals, magazines newspaper clippings, photographs, and scrapbooks.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The Alice Bell Finlayson papers were donated to the Anacostia Community Museum in 2003.

### Related Archival Materials

Finding aid to the Anacostia Historical Society records located in the Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Finding aid to the Ella B. Howard Pearis papers located in the Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Finding aid to the Charles Qualls papers located in the Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

### Processing Information

Finding aid prepared by Vuanya T. Cyrus, 2009-07-01.

Finding aid encoded by Elizabeth Bauerle, 2011-12.

### Preferred Citation

Alice Bell Finlayson papers, Anacostia Community Museum Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

Use of the materials requires an appointment. Please contact the archivist to make an appointment: [ACMarchives@si.edu](mailto:ACMarchives@si.edu).

## Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for unrestricted research. Use requires an appointment.

## Ownership and Literary Rights

The Alice Bell Finlayson papers are the physical property of the Anacostia Community Museum. Literary and copyright belong to the author/creator or their legal heirs and assigns. Rights to work produced during the normal course of Museum business resides with the Anacostia Community Museum. For further information, and to obtain permission to publish or reproduce, contact the Museum Archives.

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## Biographical Note

Alice Bell Finlayson was born in Washington, DC in 1902. She attended Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School, and in 1922, she graduated from Miner Teachers College. She went on to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree in sociology from Howard University. While pursuing her degrees she began working for the District of Columbia Public Schools. In 1922 she took a position as a 1st grade teacher at the Garrison-Cleveland School.

For fourteen of her thirty-seven years with the District of Columbia Public Schools she served as principal of James G. Birney Elementary School. During her tenure at Birney she implemented several special programs designed to improve student outcomes. These programs addressed the needs of general education, gifted, and special education students. Students participated in reading and arts programs, as well as programs designed to promote healthy living and cultural awareness. Special education students developed life skills by working in building maintenance, and by providing other support services to the school. Mrs. Finlayson also established a research division within the school to develop testing instruments. As a result of these innovations, Birney became a training school for new teachers. Moreover, the District's Board of Education implemented some of the Birney programs district-wide. The school also won three Freedoms Foundation awards.

Mrs. Finlayson resigned as principal in January of 1959 and went on to hold other employment. She was a lecturer at Morgan State University, a program assistant at Howard University, and coordinator for several community programs. Beyond her regular employment she worked with various local and national civic organizations. She was a founding member of the Community Coordinating Organization, which was a coalition of District of Columbia community organizations. As chairman of the Women's Civic Guild she raised funds for community projects and for other organizations such as the NAACP. She was an active member of the community up until her death on November 27, 2000.

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## Scope and Contents

This collection documents the life of Alice Bell Finlayson between 1922 and 1990. It contains materials related to Mrs. Finlayson's employment and community service. Included in the collection are academic writings, books, correspondence, curriculum, personnel records, photographs, and printed materials.

## Arrangement

The papers are organized into six series. The Biographical and Printed Materials series are further arranged into subseries. The content of each series is arranged alphabetically. The series are arranged as follows:

- Series 1: Biographical
- Subseries 1.1: Autobiographical
- Subseries 1.2: Education
- Subseries 1.3: Employment
- Series 2: Community Organizations
- Series 3: Correspondence
- Series 4: Photographs
- Series 5: Printed material
- Subseries 5.1: Books
- Subseries 5.2: Government publications
- Subseries 5.3: Journal Articles
- Subseries 5.4: Museum catalogs and curriculum
- Series 6: Miscellaneous

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

African American educators  
African American neighborhoods  
Community organization

Types of Materials:

Books  
Clippings  
Papers  
Periodicals  
Photographic prints  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Sketches

Names:

Anacostia Neighborhood Museum  
Finlayson, Alice Bell  
Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge  
New York University. School of Education  
Public Schools of the District of Columbia

Geographic Names:

Washington (D.C.)

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical, 1922 - 1977

#### 1.39 Linear feet

This series contains materials related to Mrs. Finlayson's employment as an educator, civic organization administrator, and journalist. Included are materials related to her pursuit of a doctorate from New York University, her career with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), and her work for various civic organizations. Most of the documents are from her tenure as principal at James G. Birney Elementary School (BES).

#### 1.1: Autobiographical

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 1-2 | Curriculum vitae, undated<br>[2 folders]     |
| Box 1, Folder 3   | Journal articles, unpublished, 1951, undated |
| Box 1, Folder 4   | Personal reflections , 1960, 1967            |

#### 1.2: Education

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 5   | Correspondence, 1938 - 1952                |
| Box 1, Folder 6-7 | Coursework and notes , 1949<br>[2 folders] |
| Box 1, Folder 8   | Grade reports , 1938 - 1961                |
| Box 1, Folder 9   | Thesis , 1946 - 1951                       |

#### 1.3: Employment

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 10-11 | Applications , 1952 - 1977<br>[2 folders]                   |
| Box 1, Folder 12-13 | BES--Curriculum , 1941 - 1958<br>[2 folders]                |
| Box 1, Folder 14-15 | BES-- Freedom Foundation, Inc. , 1950 - 1957<br>[2 folders] |
| Box 1, Folder 16    | BES--General , 1942 - 1968                                  |

Box 1, Folder 17	BES--Memos , 1954, 1946, undated
Box 1, Folder 18	BES--Memos , 1954, 1946, undated
Box 1, Folder 19	BES-- Newspaper clippings , 1950 - 1968
Box 1, Folder 20	Civil service , 1967 - 1977
Box 2, Folder 1	Commendations and recommendations , 1939 - 1977
Box 2, Folder 2	DCPS , 1922 - 1977
Box 2, Folder 3	Howard University , 1967 - 1969
Box 2, Folder 4	Morgan State University , 1959 - 1961
Box 2, Folder 5	Pearl Smith Youth Center , 1965
Box 2, Folder 6	Cross and Urban League , 1972 - 1974
Box 2, Folder 7	<i>Washington Afro--American</i> , "Rendezvous With You ," 1961 - 1962 <i>[oversize]</i>
1.4: Oversize	
Box 2, Folder 7	<i>Washington Afro--American</i> , "Rendezvous With You ," 1961 - 1962 <i>[oversize]</i>

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## Series 2: Community Organizations, 1937 - 1990

### *0.47 Linear feet*

This series contains materials related to Mrs. Finlayson's involvement with various local and national civic organizations. The documents consist of correspondence, event calendars and programs, notes, and printed materials.

Box 2, Folder 8-9	Anacostia Historical Society , 1980 - 1981 [2 folders]
Box 2, Folder 10	Anacostia Neighborhood Museum , 1981 - 1985
Box 2, Folder 11	Correspondence , 1937 - 1988
Box 2, Folder 12	Local organizations , 1937 - 1989
Box 2, Folder 13	National organizations , circa 1946-1988
Box 2, Folder 14	Newspaper clippings, newsletters and notes , circa 1945-1990, undated [oversize]

### 1.2: Oversize

Box 7, Folder 2	Newspaper clippings, newsletters and notes, circa 1945-1990, undated
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## Series 3: Correspondence, 1945 - 1988

*0.06 Linear feet*

This series contains correspondence not necessarily related to the other series. Included in this series are letters from civic and political entities, colleagues, friends, and students

Box 2, Folder 15          Personal , circa 1945-1976

Box 2, Folder 16          Political , circa 1953-1988

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## Series 4: Photographs, 1934, undated

### 1.4 Linear feet

This series contains photographic portraits of Mrs. Finlayson's friends and acquaintances. Some of the photographs were taken at the Scurlock Studio. The scrapbook has photographs, news clippings, and commentary.

Box 5	Portraits , undated
Box 5, Folder 1	Portrait/Female "To Alice from Pearle"
Box 5, Folder 2	Studio portrait of unidentified male <i>1 Photograph (12 x 8 inches)</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Scurlock Studio (Washington, D.C.)
Box 5, Folder 3	Studio portrait of unidentified male <i>1 Photograph (12 x 8 inches)</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Scurlock Studio (Washington, D.C.)
Box 5, Folder 4	Portrait of woman identified as Ruth , 1934 "To Alice from Ruth, 1934," written on bottom right of the photograph.
Box 5, Folder 5	Portrait/ Female
Box 5, Folder 6	Portrait/ Male "To Alice Devotedly Yours, Ray"
Box 5, Folder 7	Portrait/ Male "An evidence of true friendship from George to Alice"
Box 5, Folder 8	Portrait/Man in front of car
Box 5, Folder 9	Portrait of male identified as "Dutch" <i>1 Photograph (11 x 3/4 x 6 1/2 inches)</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Scurlock Studio (Washington, D.C.) "Dutch" written on front center of photograph.
Box 5, Folder 10	Portrait/Female child
Box 5, Folder 11	Portrait/Male "Sincere regards to Alice from Cobb"
Box 5, Folder 12	Portrait/Female "To Alice, Aloha from Lupe C."
Box 5, Folder 13	Portrait/ Female

Box 5, Folder 14      Portraits/ School group "Karlsruhe American School Grade 6-1955-56"

Box 2      Box 2

Cabinet 10, Drawer 2      Folder 16 [OVERSIZED]

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## Series 5: Printed materials, 1907 - 1977

## 1.77 Linear feet

The collection contains journals and books that address the issues of race and/or education. The material includes publications by federal and state entities, national leaders, educators, and sociologists.

## 5.1: Books

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Box 3, Folder 1;<br>Box 3, Folder 1   | <i>The American Race Problem: A Study of the Negro</i> , Edward Byron Reuter , 1938                          |
| Box 3, Folder 2;<br>Box 3, Folder 2   | <i>Booker T. Washington: The Master Mind of a Child of Slavery</i> , Frederick E. Drinker , 1915             |
| Box 3, Folder 3;<br>Box 3, Folder 3   | <i>Characteristics of the American Negro</i> , Otto Klineberg, editor , 1944                                 |
| Box 3, Folder 4;<br>Box 3, Folder 4   | <i>The Child's Story of the Negro</i> , Jane D. Shackleford , 1938   |
| Box 3, Folder 5;<br>Box 3, Folder 5   | <i>Color and Conscience: The Irrepressible Conflict</i> , Buell G. Gallagher , 1946                          |
| Box 3, Folder 6;<br>Box 3, Folder 6   | <i>A Course for Adults on the Negro in America</i> , Mary Debardeleben , undated                             |
| Box 3, Folder 7;<br>Box 3, Folder 7   | <i>The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South: A Study in Social Control</i> , Wilbur Bertram Doyle , 1937 |
| Box 3, Folder 8;<br>Box 3, Folder 8   | <i>The Free Negro Family</i> , E. Franklin Frazier, 1932, 1932   |
| Box 3, Folder 9;<br>Box 3, Folder 9   | <i>The Negro Question in the United States</i> , James S. Allen , 1936                                       |
| Box 3, Folder 10;<br>Box 3, Folder 10 | <i>Negro Voices: An Anthology of Contemporary Verse</i> , Beatrice Murphy, editor , 1938                     |
| Box 3, Folder 11;<br>Box 3, Folder 11 | <i>Patterns of Negro Segregation</i> , Charles S. Johnson , 1943   |
| Box 4, Folder 1;<br>Box 4, Folder 1   | <i>A Preface to Racial Understanding</i> , Charles S. Johnson , 1936   |
| Box 4, Folder 2;                      | <i>The Ransomed Wait</i> , May Miller , 1983   |

Box 4, Folder 2

Box 4, Folder 3;           *Up From Slavery*, Booker T. Washington , 1901  
Box 4, Folder 3

## 5.2: Government publications

Box 4, Folder 4           *Books About Negro Life for Children*, prepared by Augusta Baker , 1946

Box 4, Folder 5           *The Code of the District of Columbia (To March 4, 1929)*, Committee on  
Revision of the Laws of the House of Representatives , 1930

Box 4, Folder 6           *Congressional debate on segregation in the armed forces*, William L. Dawson,  
U.S. Representative, undated

Box 4, Folder 7           *Intercultural Education Through Language Arts*, The Pittsburgh Board of Public  
Education, Department of Curriculum Study and Research , 1944

Box 4, Folder 8           *Major Directions for Progress in Services for People*, Health and Welfare  
Council of the National Capital Area , 1964

Box 4, Folder 9           *The Negro: A Selected List for School Libraries of Books by or about the  
Negro in Africa and America*, Tennessee State Department of Education,  
Division of School Libraries , 1941

Box 4, Folder 10          *Statistics of the Education of Negroes: 1929--30 and 1931--32*, prepared by  
David T. Blose and Ambrose Caliver , 1936

## 5.3: Journal articles

Box 4, Folder 11          "The Black and White of Rejections for Military Service," The American  
Teachers Association , 1944

Box 4, Folder 12          "Case Studies of Negro Children of Binet IQ 160 and Above," Martin D.  
Jenkins , 1943

Box 4, Folder 13          "Ethnic Minority Groups in Wartime with Special Reference to the Negro," E.  
Franklin Frazier , 1942

Box 4, Folder 14          "'I Did It Then:" A Collection of Oral Histories," Literary Arts Program Lemuel  
Penn , 1976

Box 4, Folder 15          "The Impact of Urban Civilization Upon Negro Family Life," E. Franklin  
Frazier , 1937

- Box 4, Folder 16 "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil," E. Franklin Frazier , 1942
- Box 4, Folder 17 "Negro Harlem: An Ecological Study," E. Franklin Frazier , 1937
- Box 4, Folder 18 "Race Consciousness Among South African Natives," William Oscar Brown , 1935
- Box 4, Folder 19 "Race Prejudice: A Sociological Study," William Oscar Brown , 1929 - 1930
- Box 4, Folder 20 "The Social Implications of the Negro Spiritual," John Lovell Jr. , 1939

#### 5.4: Museum catalogues and curriculum

- Box 4, Folder 21 *The Barnett-Aden Collection*. The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum , 1974
- Box 4, Folder 22 *Frederick Douglass: A Fighter for Freedom (1817? -- 1895)*, The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum , 1979
- Box 4, Folder 23 *John Robinson: A Retrospective*. The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1976
- Box 4, Folder 24 *A Walk Through 'Old' Anacostia*. Anacostia Neighborhood Museum , 1976

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## Series 6: Miscellaneous, 1970 - 1991

*0.07 Linear feet*

This series contains documents related to Mrs. Finlayson's friends and interest.

Box 2, Folder 17      Family information , circa 1970-1991

Box 2, Folder 18      Presidential inauguration announcement and White House tea invitation, 1977,  
1979

Box 2, Folder 19      Newspaper clipping , undated  
*[oversize]*

### 6.1: Oversize

Box 7, Folder 3      Newspaper clipping, undated  
*[oversize]*

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