Abstract: In 1905, African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) responded to an inquiry from Reginald Kauffman (1877-1959), an associate editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, who was soliciting Dunbar for poems or stories.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 099, F948
Creator: Dunbar, Paul Laurence, 1872-1906.
Title: Paul Laurence Dunbar letters to Reginald Wright Kauffman
Inclusive Dates: 1905
Extent: 2 items
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 099, F948, Paul Laurence Dunbar letters to Reginald Wright Kauffman, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.
Shelving Summary: Box 66, F948: Shelved in SPEC MSS 099 manuscript boxes
Location: Special Collections, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/
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Biographical Notes

Paul Laurence Dunbar

African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), though most widely known for his dialectic verse, also wrote short stories, novels, essays, and poetry in standard English.

Dunbar's first book of poetry, Oak and Ivy, was self-published in 1893. His next book of poetry, Majors and Minors, published by Hadley & Hadley in 1896, received the positive attention of American novelist William Dean Howell; who praised Dunbar's dialectic poems in a review published in Harper's Weekly. This positive critical reception in a popular American periodical launched Dunbar's career. Paul Laurence Dunbar would write numerous collections of poetry, several novels, collections of short stories, as well as participate in reading tours in the United States and England.

Reginald Wright Kauffman

American writer and editor Reginald Wright Kauffman (1877-1959) was an Associate Editor of the Saturday Evening Post when he corresponded with Dunbar in 1905.

Kaufman, who wrote numerous works of fiction and screenplays for Hollywood film productions, was also the editor of the Bangor Maine Daily News and an accredited correspondent with the United States Navy.

Between 1914 and 1934, a number of Kauffman's stories and novels were produced as Hollywood films, including The House of Bondage, (1914) adapted from his novel of the same title, and School for Girls (1934), based on his story "Our Undisciplined Daughters."

Sources:


In 1905, African American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) responded to an inquiry from Reginald Kauffman (1877-1959), an associate editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, who was soliciting Dunbar for poems or stories.

The two typed and signed letters, dated October 4 and November 13, 1905, reveal Dunbar's sense of humor and the difficulties of trying to survive as a writer. Lamenting the financial proposition of "verse writing," Dunbar wrote, "I have been contemplating for a long while the institution of a pension committee for ancient and decayed verse writers" and then offered a deprecating anecdote about his "fame" (October 4).

Dunbar wrote on November 13 of being an invalid and needing an attendant, but then followed with a humorous anecdote about the lack of respect for his writing. Dunbar concluded his letter by mentioning the poem "Sling along," which he had enclosed (no longer with the letter). Both letters provide insight into the professional life of a poet in the early twentieth century.
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Dunbar, Paul Laurence, 1872-1906--Correspondence.

Kauffman, Reginald Wright, 1877-1959--Correspondence.

Topical Terms

African American poets--20th century--Correspondence.

American poetry--20th century.

Form/Genre Terms

Correspondence.

Occupation

Poets.

Editors.

Personal Contributors

Kauffman, Reginald Wright, 1877-1959, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository

This item forms part of MSS 099 Miscellaneous Literary and Historical Manuscripts.

MSS 113 Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers

MSS 099, F65 Paul Laurence Dunbar letter to Ginger R. Percy

MSS 099, F315 Paul Laurence Dunbar: "On the Death of Walter Class"

MSS 099, F315 Paul Laurence Dunbar: "Life"
Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.
Detailed Description of the Collection

Paul Laurence Dunbar typed letter signed to Reginald Wright Kauffman, 1905 October 4 [Box 66 F948]

Paul Laurence Dunbar typed letter signed to Reginald Wright Kauffman, 1905 November 13 [Box 66 F948]