

**Roanoke Public Libraries
Virginia Room
Manuscript Collection Finding Aids
Dr. John Kern Papers**

Collection Description:

Repository: Roanoke Public Libraries, Virginia Room

Accession Number: 2010.1.4; Addendum: 2018.07.25

Title: Dr. John Kern Papers,

Physical Characteristics: 5 record storage boxes

Donated by: Dr. John Kern

Arrangement: Documents are arranged geographically.

Creator: Dr. John Kern, Roanoke Regional Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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Processor: Cecelia L. Parks, January 27, 2011; Addendum, Dyron Knick, 12 September 2018.

Biographical Note:

John Kern was born on January 28, 1940 in Iowa City, Iowa. After earning his bachelor's degree at Swarthmore College in 1961, he served two years in the Peace Corps in Tunisia. He earned his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1968, and he became interested in black history while earning his doctoral degree in American history at the same institution in 1976. He came to Roanoke in 1989 to become the regional director of Virginia's newly created Department of Historic Resources. The office nominated many Southwest Virginia historic sites and areas to state and national registries. Some of his accomplishments include the successful nomination of the Historic Gainsboro District to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and the placement of the Pearisburg Downtown Historic District on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. He taught courses in black history at Hollins University until 2008. He has published work in *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, *Florida Memorial College Academic Review*, *Notes on Virginia*, *From Here to There*, and *Delaware History*. One of his former Hollins students, Arleen Ollie, said of Kern, "John is much like one of the treasures he has resurrected." He was called "a fervent steward of history" by *The Roanoke Times*. Kern retired from the Department of Historic Resources in 2010. He received an Education Award from the Roanoke Valley Preservation Society in the same year. John Kern passed away on March 18, 2018.

Scope and Content:

The Kern Papers are comprised of documents, photographs, and newspaper articles that are a product of the research done by Kern during his time as Roanoke Regional Director for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources at the Department of Historic Resources. The collection includes copies of nominations of historic sites in Southwest Virginia to the National Registry of Historic Places and the research that went into those nominations, including records, photographs, and newspaper articles. Also included in Kern's papers is his research of several areas in Southwest Virginia, including sites in Roanoke, Henry, Montgomery, Pulaski, Rockbridge, Smyth, Franklin, Floyd, Washington, Giles, and Russell Counties as well as in Roanoke City, Blacksburg, Wytheville, Buena Vista, and Covington, that were not nominated,

research on Robert J. Boland and John Willis Chappelle, Jr, that were submitted to the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* series, articles and research on subjects related to black history in Southwest Virginia, and documents related to workshops and conferences on black history that Kern helped organize. Research and a paper done under Kern's supervision by an intern on Roanoke's segregation ordinances is included as well. Many of the reports and nominations included can also be accessed online at www.dhr.virginia.gov.

Addendum 2018.07.25 materials are composed of Dr. Kern's work as Director of the Delaware State Division of Cultural Affairs. This addendum consists of information related primarily to historic sites in the State of Delaware. The majority of material consists of presentations Dr. Kern gave at various conferences, symposiums, meetings, and workshops throughout the United States on topics of historical significance. Items are arranged as they were kept by Dr. Kern.

Container List:

Box 1 of 5:

Folder 1: Buena Vista, Roanoke City research

Folder 2: Belmont, Roanoke City Papers and research

Folder 3: "Historical, Archaeological, and Architectural Investigations of Belmont, in the City of Roanoke, Virginia"

Folder 4: Miscellaneous research on William Fleming and Belmont

Folder 5: Maps and tracings of William Fleming's plantation and other land

Folder 6: Copy of Belmont report sent to landowner

Folder 7: Miscellaneous research--Belmont

Folder 8: William Fleming's Account Book (1768 - 1780)

Folder 9: "Thematic Evaluation of County Public School Buildings in Southwest Virginia"

Folder 10: Greenfield, Botetourt County; 2009; 011-0026

Folder 11: Greenfield kitchen and cabin 10/09; 11/09 VT view shed/landscape analysis

Folder 12: Research on Robert J. Boland [included in *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* Vol 2, 2001]

Folder 13: From Here to There; "South by Wagon" pp 147-149

Folder 14: "Black History in Southwest Virginia" 1790 - 1900 article and research [published in *Florida Memorial College Academic Review* Vol 3, 1994; pp37-44]

Folder 15: George Kegley "roast" and biographical material

Folder 16: John Willis Chappelle, Jr [published in *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* Vol 3, 2006]

Folder 17: "Oscar Micheaux, Race Films, and Roanoke's Strand Theatre" [published in *Notes on Virginia*, 2006]

Folder 18: Oscar Micheaux and Gainsboro--research from Ed Barnett

Folder 19: "Record of Early Family Ownership of Land and Buildings on Gills Creek, Franklin County, Virginia, 1786-1847"

Folder 20: Jubal Early's Homes, Franklin County, Virginia

Folder 21: New Castle Historic District

Folder 22: National Register of Historic Places Nominations: Buchanan, Clifton Forge, Covington, Danville, Pearisburg, Lylburn Downing School, Philip Craft House, Hill Grove School, Dublin, Mount Moriah Baptist Church and Cemetery, Olive Branch Missionary Baptist Church

Folder 23: Mount Moriah Baptist Church Easement 2004

Folders 24-27: Mount Moriah Baptist Church Easement (2000) and Historic Marker [4 folders]

**Box 2 of 5: Nominations with research for the National Register of Historic Places;
some nominations are partial.**

Folder 1: Childress Presbyterian Rock Churches Nominations: Buffalo Mountain,
Dinwiddie, Mayberry, Willis, Bluemont, Floyd

Folder 2: Childress Presbyterian Rock Churches research: Dinwiddie, Buffalo Mountain, Slate
Mountain, Bluemont

Folder 3: Childress Presbyterian Rock Churches research: Willis, Bob Childress, miscellaneous

Folder 4: Fieldale Historic District nomination, Henry County

Folder 5: Fieldale research: land books (1958) and oral history interviews

Folder 6: Fieldale research: miscellaneous

Folder 7: Fieldale research 2007, including maps

Folder 8: Fieldale: articles from Bea Bullard

Folder 9: Fayette Street Historic District nomination, Martinsville

Folders 10-11: Fayette Street research [2 folders]

Folder 12: Kentland Farm Historic and Archaeological District nomination, Montgomery County

Folders 13-16: Kentland Farm research [4 folders]

Folder 17: Kent Family slaves: Montgomery and Pulaski Counties; 2007

Folder 18: Kentland background

Folder 19: Gainsboro Library nomination, Roanoke City

Folder 20: Gainsboro Library research

Folder 21: Hotel Roanoke nomination, Roanoke City

Folder 22: Norfolk & Western archives

Folder 23: Hotel Roanoke research

Folder 24: Roanoke Leader, 1882

Folder 25: Establishment of Norfolk & Western and Roanoke Land & Improvement Company,
1881-1884

Folder 26: Buffalo Forge nomination, Rockbridge County

Folder 27: Buffalo Forge research

Folder 28: H.L. Bonham House nomination, Smyth County

Folders 29-30: H.L. Bonham House research [2 folders]

Folder 31: St. John's Episcopal Church nomination, Wytheville

Folders 32-33: St. John's Episcopal Church research [2 folders]

**Box 3 of 5: Nominations with research for the National Register of Historic Places;
some nominations are partial**

Folder 1: First Baptist Church nomination, Roanoke

Folder 2: First Baptist Church nomination drafts and correspondence

Folder 3: First Baptist Church records 9/90

Folder 4: First Baptist Church: materials from church; includes photos of the church

Folder 5: First Baptist Church: materials from Geneva Hale

Folder 6: First Baptist Church research

Folder 7: First Baptist Church: records 1890-?, miscellaneous
Folder 8: First Baptist Church: meeting minutes April 1892, January 1894 - June 1900
Folder 9: First Baptist Church: meeting minutes September 1900 - January 1906
Folder 10: First Baptist Church: resolutions 1896 - 1897
Folder 11: First Baptist Church: miscellaneous receipts and correspondence
Folder 12: First Baptist Church: business meeting minutes, January 2, 1925 - June 3, 1927
Folder 13: First Baptist Church: ledger 1924 - 1930
Folder 14: First Baptist Church: April - May 1995 [includes presentation 1/21/1996]
Folder 15: Newport Historic District nomination, Giles County
Folders 16-17: Newport research [2 folders]
Folder 18: Rocky Mount Historic District nomination, Franklin County
Folder 19: Rocky Mount research
Folder 20: Odd Fellows Hall nomination, Blacksburg
Folder 21: Odd Fellows Hall research 2005
Folder 22: Odd Fellows Hall research
Folder 23: Covington High School nomination, City of Covington
Folder 24: Covington High School research
Folder 25: Jessee's Mill nomination, Russell County
Folder 26: Jessee's Mill research
Folder 27: Piedmont Mill Historic District nomination, Franklin County
Folder 28: Piedmont Mill research
Folder 29: Honaker Historic District nomination, Russell County
Folder 30: Honaker research
Folder 31: W.N. Seay House full nomination, Buena Vista
Folder 32: Seay House research
Folder 33: Edmondson Hall nomination, Washington County
Folder 34: Edmondson Hall research

Box 4 of 5:

Folder 1: Dublin Historic District nomination, Pulaski County; 1992
Folder 2: Dublin research
Folder 3: Floyd Historic District nomination, Floyd County
Folder 4: Floyd research
Folder 5: Floyd research: acts, census, land books, maps
Folder 6: Floyd research: schools
Folder 7: Floyd research: walking tour
Folder 8: Floyd research: survey and town designation; 1986 comprehensive plan
Folder 9: Floyd research: Historical Society tour, June 23, 2004
Folder 10: Floyd research: population and 1987-88 inventory of buildings in the Town of Floyd
Folder 11: Floyd research: Internet and bibliography; index of enrolled bills to 1910
Folder 12: Floyd research: Tise Collection information, Presley Church, schools and academies
Folder 13: Floyd research: statement of significance--Floyd Presbyterian Church, Glenanna, Old Court House, Rakes House
Folder 14: Floyd research: Comprehensive Plan 1986 - 1989, some news articles 1989 - 1994
Folders 15-16: Low Moor Mine, Alleghany County research [2 folders]

- Folder 17: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: examples of primary research nominations (Lylburn School, Buffalo Forge, and First Baptist Church)
- Folder 18: "Segregation by Custom vs. Segregation by Law: Residential Segregation Ordinances and Their Effects on the City of Roanoke 1910 – 1917" by Naomi A. Mattos
- Folder 19: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Edwards
- Folder 20: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Pentecost/Hill
- Folder 21: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Dudley
- Folder 22: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Roberts
- Folder 23: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: residential law
- Folder 24: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Gilmer Avenue
- Folder 25: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: black secret and professional societies
- Folder 26: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Gainsboro Public Library
- Folder 27: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Oliver White Hill Foundation, Inc.
- Folder 28: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: Henry St. Historic District
- Folder 29: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research: miscellaneous
- Folder 30: Roanoke Segregation Ordinance research
- Folders 31-33: National Park Service Diversity Intern Program November 2004 [3 folders]
- Folder 34: Arleen Ollie Grant Proposal
- Folders 35-38: Miscellaneous Black History files [4 folders]
- Folder 39: "Washington & DuBois at the Turn of Two Centuries" Conference March 1998 files
- Folders 40-41: "African American Heritage Education" lecture & workshop; 1994 [2 folders]
- Folder 42: "African American Heritage Education" lecture & workshop: list of registrants and evaluation forms
- Folder 43: "African American Heritage Education" lecture & workshop: press and miscellaneous
- Folder 44: "African American Heritage Education" lecture & workshop: meeting January 1994
- Folder 45: "Building Codes and Historic Preservation" workshop
- Folder 46: Henry County-Martinsville and Bassett Historic Contexts; 1990
- Folder 47: Original Newspapers from Files
- Addendum (Items donated after February 2010)**
- Folder 48: "Davis v. Prince Edward County, Virginia 1951: Land Book Research on Co-signers for Moton School Student Petitioners," presented at Virginia Forum 25 March 2011
- Folder 49: "Bassett Furniture: Historic Context, Henry County, VA"
- Folder 50: Rev. Richard R. Jones Biographical Information

Addendum: 2018.07.25: Body of Work from time as Director of Delaware State Division of Cultural Affairs

Box 5 of 5:

- Folder 1: Colonial Williamsburg – Visit with Denny O’Toole
- Folder 2: John Dickinson Plantation – Presentations at annual meetings of Friends of John Dickinson Plantation, 1984-1988
- Folder 3: Sharpley’s Bottom and Dickinson Plantation – Presentation given to New York University graduate seminar in American History and Historical Archaeology
- Folder 4: Swarthmore-Chester Internship Program
- Folder 5: Society for Historical Archaeology

- Folder 6: Boston Impressment Riots of the 1740s – Presentation given to the American Society for 18th Century Studies in Toledo, OH, 29 October 1976
- Folder 7: Constitution Bicentennial – Fire Hall Presentation at Robbins Hose Company #1, 7 December 1987
- Folder 8: Delaware Museums – Interview with “Focus Delaware” for WNSTV, 21 August 1984
- Folder 9: Dickinson Plantation – Interview with “Focus Delaware” for WNSTV, 2 October 1984
- Folder 10: Dedication of Dr. John McKinly Grave – Remarks given at ceremony
- Folder 11: Delaware Recreation and Parks Society – Presentation on Preserving Delaware’s Landscapes, 2 April 1987
- Folder 12: Wilmington Historic Preservation Week Symposium – Presentation on the State Historic Preservation Office and the city’s preservation program, 9 May 1988
- Folder 13: Delaware State College – Participation in Dedication of historical markers, 23 October 1988
- Folder 14: Harlan Family Tricentennial Reunion – Remarks made at celebration, 15 August 1987
- Folder 15: Seventh State House Symposium – Presentation: “A Year of Celebration: Delaware’s Constitutional Bicentennial”, 6 December 1986
- Folder 16: Abbott’s Mill Nature Center – Presentation for dedication ceremony, 26 October 1986
- Folder 17: Miscellaneous presentations
- Folder 18: “Four Little Pages” – Stage play produced by the National Park Service to commemorate the bicentennial of the United States Constitution
- Folder 19: “Delaware to Annapolis: 200 Years Later” – Presentation at convention, September 1986
- Folder 20: Sharpely’s Bottom Historic Sites – Proposals for Phase II Investigations
- Folder 21: “Sussex County Election Riots of 1787” – Stage play materials
- Folder 22: Delaware Local Records Advisory Committee – program development and grant award
- Folder 23: Delaware Breakwater Quarantine Station – dedication of historic marker
- Folder 24: Currier and Ives Exhibition – opening ceremony
- Folder 25: Hagley Museum and Library – Public History Conference, 3 December 1984
- Folder 26: Miscellaneous conferences
- Folder 27: Planning for the Constitutional Bicentennial
- Folder 28: Historical Societies of Sussex County – Presentation at 11th annual meeting, 13 April 1985
- Folder 29: Delaware Society of Architects – presentation, 5 June 1985
- Folder 30: Sharpely’s Bottom Historical Site – Conceptual material on research design
- Folder 31: Delaware State Program Review – Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation program and fiscal audit, 1984
- Folder 32: Report on Cultural Resources/Historic Preservation – Laws in Delaware
- Folder 33: Delaware State Review Board for Historic Preservation – operating procedures
- Folder 34: Murderkill River Corridor Report, Kent Conservation District, 1986
- Folder 35: Media Production Grant Application for John Dickinson script by Daniel Blake Smith, 1986
- Folder 36: Society for Historical Archaeology – Paper prepared for the 16th annual meeting: “History as Arbiter of Association Significance for Material Culture and the Built Environment”, January 1983

- Folder 37: Society for Historical Archaeology – 17th annual meeting symposium materials, January 1984
- Folder 38: Proposal for Inventory of Historic Architectural Properties at US Army Material Development and Readiness Command Installations/Sub-installations, 1982
- Folder 39: Society for American Archaeology – symposium materials, April 1982
- Folder 40: Society for Historical Archaeology – symposium materials, December 1982
- Folder 41: Delaware River and Bay – Historical and archaeological research
- Folder 42: Fourth Annual Conference on Public History – materials, April 1982
- Folder 43: Third Annual Conference on Public History – materials, April 1981
- Folder 44: Public History Conference – “History for Hire” panel discussion materials, April 1981
- Folder 45: Third Symposium on Environmental Concerns in Rights-of-Way Management – Presentation, February 1982