

**Interoffice Memo**

**Bennington College**

To Library Committee  
Black Library Committee

Date  
5/30/72

From RM Agard

Re: Black Library

This is a statement of what has been done and what we might like to do. I have prepared this because a progress report needs to be sent to the Schurman Foundation

BLACK LIBRARY, Dec. 1971 - May 1972

The grant of \$3000 made by the Schurman Foundation to Bennington College makes possible the development of a significant Black Library - literature and other materials relating to the life accomplishments, history and condition of the Negro.

Upon receipt of the gift, the librarian consulted the Library Advisory Committee to determine the appropriate method for selecting books and administering the grant. This committee called an open meeting of all faculty and students interested in the project. From this meeting a Black Library Committee was selected of five Black students, one Black faculty member, the chairman of the library committee and the librarian.

Some of the matters discussed by both groups were the scope and nature of the collection, how it should be catalogued, and whether it should be a separate collection. It was concluded that books should be the first concern. That slides and recordings were important, but that it was not wise for the library to acquire kinds of materials (like films) which it does not now include.

During the winter non-resident term much work was done on this project. Through consultation with Black Studies specialists and specialized book dealers a list of about 200 titles was compiled. The task of ordering them for the library is in process. Their cost is estimated to be between \$1000 and \$2000, due in part to the large number of paper bound books.

The major thrust of the first selections has been toward a collection of contemporary writings by those Blacks who have been active in the Black movement, and who speak with the authority of direct involvement in the current search for Black consciousness. There is an extensive representation of the literary works of important Black writers. To a lesser extent there are books about Africa and African art, and slavery. A Bennington student has prepared an excellent, select bibliography as part of her independent study in NeoAfrican literature. The major task remaining is to give careful consideration to the historical perspective. Blacks in America by McPherson, Holland and others (1971) will be an important guide in the selection process.

Robert M. Agard  
Librarian

May 26, 1972