



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Archives of American Art*

## **Celebrating 175: Research File, Coleman, Floyd, circa 1975-1991**

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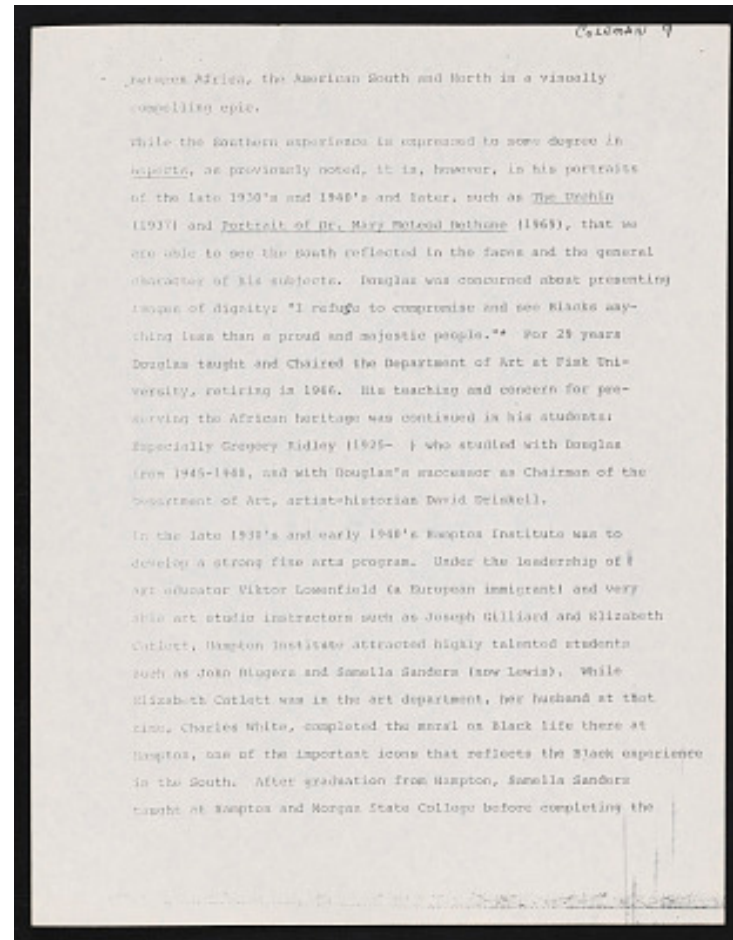
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between Africa, the American South and North in a visually compelling epic.

While the Southern experience is expressed to some degree in Aspects, as previously noted, it is, however, in his portraits of the late 1930's and 1940's and later, such as *The Urchin* (1937) and *Portrait of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune* (1969), that we are able to see the South reflected in the faces and the general character of his subjects. Douglas was concerned about presenting images of dignity: "I refuse to compromise and see Blacks anything less than a proud and majestic people."\* for 29 years Douglas taught and Chaired the Department of Art at Fisk University, retiring in 1966. His teaching and concern for preserving the African heritage was continued in his students: Especially Gregory Ridley (1925- ) who studied with Douglas from 1945-1948, and with Douglas's successor as Chairman of the Department of Art, artist-historian David Driskell.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's Hampton Institute was to develop a strong fine arts program. Under the leadership of art educator Viktor Lowenfield (a European immigrant) and very able art studio instructors such as Joseph Gilliard and Elizabeth Catlett, Hampton Institute attracted highly talented students such as John Biggers and Samella Sanders (now Lewis). While Elizabeth Catlett was in the art department, her husband at that time, Charles White, completed the mural on Black life there at Hampton, one of the important icons that reflects the Black experience in the South. After graduation from Hampton, Samella Sanders taught at Hampton and Morgan State College before completing the



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