

# Guide to the Samuel Moss Carter Papers

RG 268



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2016

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Yale Divinity Library  
409 Prospect Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
(203) 432-5301  
divinity.library@yale.edu  
<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

**CALL NUMBER:** RG 268

**CREATOR:** Carter, Samuel Moss, 1904-1999

**TITLE:** Samuel Moss Carter Papers

**DATES:** 1923-1995

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 14.5 linear feet (36 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Sermons, writings, notes, teaching materials, and personal items provide substantive documentation of the life and work of Dr. Samuel Moss Carter, an early African American graduate of the Yale Divinity School, who was a Baptist pastor and professor of Church History, primarily in Virginia.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.268>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.268>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Symone B. Scales, 2015-2016

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Preferred Citation

Samuel Moss Carter Papers (RG 268), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Samuel Moss Carter was born October 20, 1904, in New Haven, Pennsylvania and grew up in Columbus, Ohio. He was a third generation Baptist minister; his father, Rev. John Wesley Carter later served for a time at the prominent Providence Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois.

After receiving a B.A. from Ohio State University in 1927, Carter went on to study at the Yale Divinity School, one of few students of color at the time. He graduated with a B.D. in 1930 and continued graduate study toward a Ph.D. at Yale but did not complete the degree.

Following his time at Yale Divinity School, Carter served as Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Shaw University in North Carolina and served as a pastor in Baptist churches, including in Winston, North Carolina. In 1944 he became the pastor of First Institutional Baptist Church in St. Petersburg, Florida. In 1948 he left Florida to work at Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia, serving as Dean for three years and as Professor of Church History and Missions at Virginia Union University and the Union Theological Seminary in Richmond until 1979. In 1950, Carter became pastor of First Baptist Church, Centralia, Virginia, where he served for forty years before retiring in 1990.

Carter received a Master in Theology in 1957 and a D.D. from Union Theological Seminary in 1982. He died on May 5, 1999.

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## Scope and Contents

Sermons, writings and notes, teaching materials, and personal items provide substantive documentation of the work of Dr. Samuel Moss Carter, an early African American graduate of the Yale Divinity School.

As noted in a letter from Carter's daughter, the donor of the collection, "Dr. Carter's collected works provide a unique and intimate portrait of a dedicated Baptist minister and theologian and reflect the tenor of the country from the late 1930s through the 1970s, and in particular the influence that the Yale experience undoubtedly had on his ministry."

Combining pastoral work with academic work throughout his career, Carter had a particular interest in documenting Black Christianity in the United States. His 1957 Master's thesis was titled "Representative Negro Baptist Preachers" and the dissertation he prepared for a Yale Ph.D degree (not completed) was "The Religion of the American Negro Slave."

The many sermons by Carter and his writings and notes on Black preaching in this collection provide unique insight on the Black church in the mid-20th century. In an interview for a newspaper article published in *Richmond News Leader* at the time of his retirement as pastor of First Baptist Church of Centralia, Carter indicated that he had noticed four kinds of Black preachers over the years: "The first kind is the kind like up north, who follow the white method. They just stand up there and talk nice. Another is the ones who sing the Gospel, who have what you call 'The Tone.' Then there's the 'emphasis' kind, the kind identified with Virginia. They just know how to emphasize different words, and to just use a lovely emphasis. The last kind is the kind that combines all of that."

Carter was a meticulous keeper of records, saving notes, papers, syllabi, and writings from throughout his long life. In most cases, materials in the collection have been kept together according to the labels on folders that Carter created, though the folders may have contained a fairly wide spectrum of types of material.

Series I, Sermons / Addresses, is divided according to different systems that Carter had in place to file his sermons, including by theme, by a numbered sequence, and by date. Series II, Course-Related Materials, is divided into two sections, "Courses taken" and "Courses taught." While every effort has been made to distinguish between the two types of material, not all documents were well-marked. The Notes of Series III have been organized alphabetically by topic. Again in this series, the lines between topics may be quite blurry, but a sense of Carter's interests shows through clearly. The notes include both handwritten notes and collected articles or newsclippings. The writings of Series IV include a few published items

as well as essays written while at Yale Divinity School and other unpublished essays. Series V contains primarily documentation of institutions and organizations that Carter served. Series VI, Personal Items and Memorabilia, includes a small amount of correspondence as well as biographical documentation and photographs, including of his time at Yale Divinity School.

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## **Arrangement**

- I. Sermons / Addresses
- II. Course-Related Materials
- III. Notes
- IV. Writings
- V. Related to Organizations / Institutions
- VI. Personal Items and Memorabilia

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Sermons / Addresses

#### By theme

b. 1, f. 1	All Saints Day
b. 1, f. 2	Building
b. 1, f. 3	Christmas
b. 1, f. 4	Church
b. 1, f. 5	Emancipation
b. 1, f. 6	Fourth of July
b. 1, f. 7	Funeral (1)
b. 1, f. 8	Funeral (2)
b. 1, f. 9	Funeral (3)
b. 1, f. 10	Funeral (4)
b. 2, f. 1	Minister Seminar
b. 2, f. 2	Mother's Day
b. 2, f. 3	Race
b. 2, f. 4	Stewardship
b. 2, f. 5	Youth

#### Dated sequence

b. 2, f. 6	1983	1983
b. 2, f. 7	1984 (1)	1984
b. 2, f. 8	1984 (2)	1984
b. 2, f. 9	1985	1985
b. 2, f. 10	1986	1986
b. 3, f. 1	1986-1987 (1)	1986-1987
b. 3, f. 2	1986-1987 (2)	1986-1987
b. 3, f. 3	1987 (1)	1987
b. 3, f. 4	1987 (2)	1987
b. 3, f. 5	1988 (1)	1988
b. 3, f. 6	1988 (2)	1988

## Dated sequence (continued)

b. 3, f. 7	1989 (1)	1989
b. 3, f. 8	1989 (2)	1989
b. 3, f. 9	1989 (3)	1989
<p>Numbered sequence</p> <p>The numbers in this section refer to Carter's notations on packets of sermons that included twenty to forty sermons each. There was not a discernable gathering principle for the packets, by date or theme.</p>		
b. 4, f. 1	1	
b. 4, f. 2	2	
b. 4, f. 3	3	
b. 4, f. 4	4	
b. 4, f. 5	5	
b. 4, f. 6	6	
b. 5, f. 1	7	
b. 5, f. 2	8	
b. 5, f. 3	9	
b. 5, f. 4	10	
b. 5, f. 5	11	
b. 5, f. 6	12	
b. 5, f. 7	14	
b. 6, f. 1	15	
b. 6, f. 2	16	
b. 6, f. 3	17	
b. 6, f. 4	18	
b. 6, f. 5	19 (1)	
b. 6, f. 6	19 (2)	
b. 7, f. 1	20	
b. 7, f. 2	21 (1)	
b. 7, f. 3	21 (2)	
b. 7, f. 4	21 (3)	
b. 7, f. 5	22	

## Numbered sequence (continued)

b. 7, f. 6	23
b. 7, f. 7	26
b. 7, f. 8	28 (1)
b. 7, f. 9	28 (2)
b. 8, f. 1	30
b. 8, f. 2	31
b. 8, f. 3	32
b. 8, f. 4	33
b. 8, f. 5	34
b. 8, f. 6	35
b. 9, f. 1	40
b. 9, f. 2	41
b. 9, f. 3	42
b. 9, f. 4	43
b. 9, f. 5	44
b. 9, f. 6	46
b. 9, f. 7	47
b. 10, f. 1	48
b. 10, f. 2	49
b. 10, f. 3	50 (1)
b. 10, f. 4	50 (2)
b. 10, f. 5	53
b. 11, f. 1	54 (1)
b. 11, f. 2	54 (2)
b. 11, f. 3	57
b. 11, f. 4	60
b. 11, f. 5	61 (1)
b. 11, f. 6	61 (2)
b. 11, f. 7	62
b. 12, f. 1	63 (1)



## Numbered sequence (continued)

b. 12, f. 2	63 (2)	
b. 12, f. 3	64	
b. 12, f. 4	71	
b. 12, f. 5	72	
b. 12, f. 6	73	
b. 12, f. 7	74	
b. 13, f. 1	75 (1)	
b. 13, f. 2	75 (2)	
b. 13, f. 3	90 (1)	
b. 13, f. 4	90 (2)	
b. 13, f. 5	91	
Radio addresses		
b. 13, f. 6	Radio Addresses (1)	
b. 13, f. 7	Radio Addresses (2)	
Other sermons		
b. 14, f. 1-7	Miscellaneous, including typed sermons: "Moving Mountains of Race Prejudice," "A New World A Comin'", "Goodwill for Retaliation", "The Conquest of Fear"	No date
b. 35, f. 1-4	Miscellaneous, from packets labeled "Best sermons" and "Special Sermons"	No date
b. 35, f. 5	Christmas sermons	No date
b. 35, f. 6	Installation and anniversary sermons	No date
b. 35, f. 7	Revival sermons	No date
b. 35, f. 8	Sermons on the Church	No date
b. 36, f. 1	Sermons on the Apostle Paul	No date
b. 36, f. 2-3	Miscellaneous handwritten sermons, including "The Cross of Circumstance," "Do You Belong to God?", "The Unavoidable God", "Transfigured Living"	No date
b. 36, f. 4	Sermon notes, sermons not preached	No date
b. 36, f. 5	Sermons by others	No date
b. 15, f. 1-7	Miscellaneous, including typed sermons "Life's Boundaries", "The Rich Fool"	

**Series II: Course-Related Materials**

Courses taken		
b. 16, f. 1	Bible Survey	1940–1941
b. 16, f. 2	Church History	1930–1931
b. 16, f. 3	Christian Doctrine	1940–1949
b. 16, f. 4	Education (Secondary)	1936
b. 16, f. 5	Educational Psychology	
b. 16, f. 6	Educational History	1933
b. 16, f. 7	Ethics (Professor Calhoun)	
b. 16, f. 8	Ethics (Professor Richard Niebuhr)	
b. 16, f. 9	Ethics (Professor Reinhold Niebuhr)	
b. 16, f. 10	Ethnography	
b. 16, f. 11	Old Testament Exegesis	1942
b. 16, f. 12	Old Testament History and Literature	1940
b. 17, f. 1	Old Testament History	1953–1954
b. 17, f. 2	Old Testament Prophets	1937, 1940
b. 17, f. 3	Philosophy 201	
b. 17, f. 4	Philosophy 301	
b. 17, f. 5	Philosophy 302	
b. 17, f. 6	Philosophy 602	
b. 17, f. 7	Psychology 201	1934
b. 17, f. 8	Psychology 202	1933
b. 17, f. 9	Religion and Contemporary Politics	
b. 17, f. 10	Religion (Professor Calhoun)	
b. 17, f. 11	Spiritual Content of Literature	
b. 17, f. 12	Universal Education in the South	
Courses taught		
b. 18, f. 1	Baptist History, Church Administration and Polity	1961, 1966
b. 18, f. 2	Black Christian Leaders	
b. 18, f. 3	Black Church	

## Courses taught (continued)

b. 18, f. 4	Black Preachers	1976
b. 18, f. 5	Black Religion, American	1979
b. 18, f. 6	Christianity, American	1977
b. 18, f. 7	Christian Missions	1959
b. 18, f. 8	Christianity in Modern Europe	1970
b. 18, f. 9	Christian Thought	
b. 18, f. 10	Church History (1 of 11) Course titles include Early Church History, Modern Church History, American Church History, European Church History, Modern and American Church History, History of Christian Thought	1966, 1967,1968,1969,1970,1973,1977,
b. 19, f. 1	Church History (2 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 2	Church History (3 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 3	Church History (4 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 4	Church History (5 of 11)	
b. 11, f. 5	Church History (6 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 6	Church History (7 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 7	Church History (8 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 8	Church History (9 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 9	Church History (10 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 10	Church History (11 of 11)	
b. 19, f. 11	Church Ministry	1973–1974
b. 19, f. 12	Church Ministry	1974–1975
b. 19, f. 13	Historical and Theological Studies	1979
b. 20, f. 1	Psychology of Religion	
b. 20, f. 2	Religious Cults and Sects	
b. 20, f. 3	Rural Church	

## Series III: Notes

Many of the notes in this section are handwritten notes taken by Carter from his reading or in class. Some categories also contain collected articles and newsclippings on the subject.

b. 20, f. 4	Baptists
b. 20, f. 5	Bible (1 of 3)
b. 20, f. 6	Bible (2 of 3)
b. 20, f. 7	Bible (3 of 3)
b. 21, f. 1	Black Church (1 of 2)
b. 21, f. 2	Black Church (2 of 2)
b. 21, f. 3	Black Preachers (1 of 2)
b. 21, f. 4	Black Preachers (2 of 2)
b. 21, f. 5	Christianity (1 of 2)
b. 21, f. 6	Christianity (2 of 2)
b. 21, f. 7	Christian Missions
b. 22, f. 1	Christian Ministry
b. 22, f. 2	Church History (1 of 20)
b. 22, f. 3	Church History (2 of 20)
b. 22, f. 4	Church History (3 of 20)
b. 22, f. 5	Church History (4 of 20)
b. 22, f. 6	Church History (5 of 20)
b. 22, f. 7	Church History (6 of 20)
b. 22, f. 8	Church History (7 of 20)
b. 22, f. 9	Church History (8 of 20)
b. 23, f. 1	Church History (9 of 20)
b. 23, f. 2	Church History (10 of 20)
b. 23, f. 3	Church History (11 of 20)
b. 23, f. 4	Church History (12 of 20)
b. 23, f. 5	Church History (13 of 20)
b. 23, f. 6	Church History (14 of 20)
b. 23, f. 7	Church History (15 of 20)
b. 24, f. 1	Church History (16 of 20)

b. 24, f. 2	Church History (17 of 20)
b. 24, f. 3	Church History (18 of 20)
b. 24, f. 4	Church History (19 of 20)
b. 24, f. 5	Church History (20 of 20)
b. 24, f. 6	Education
b. 24, f. 7	Educational Psychology (1 of 3)
b. 24, f. 8	Educational Psychology (2 of 3)
b. 25, f. 1	Educational Psychology (3 of 3)
b. 25, f. 2	Ethics (1 of 3)
b. 25, f. 3	Ethics (2 of 3)
b. 25, f. 4	Ethics (3 of 3)
b. 25, f. 5	German
b. 25, f. 6	Human Geography
b. 25, f. 7	Negro Church
b. 25, f. 8	Old Testament
b. 26, f. 1	Philosophy of Religion (1 of 3)
b. 26, f. 2	Philosophy of Religion (2 of 3)
b. 26, f. 3	Philosophy of Religion (3 of 3)
b. 26, f. 4	Practical Theology
b. 26, f. 5	Psychology of Religion (1 of 3)
b. 27, f. 1	Psychology of Religion (2 of 3)
b. 27, f. 2	Psychology of Religion (3 of 3)
b. 27, f. 3	Religion of American Negro Slave (1 of 5)
b. 27, f. 4	Religion of American Negro Slave (2 of 5)
b. 27, f. 5	Religion of American Negro Slave (3 of 5)
b. 27, f. 6	Religion of American Negro Slave (4 of 5)
b. 27, f. 7	Religion of American Negro Slave (5 of 5)
b. 28, f. 1	Religious Education (1 of 3)
b. 28, f. 2	Religious Education (2 of 3)
b. 28, f. 3	Religious Education (3 of 3)

b. 28, f. 4	Religious Cults
b. 28, f. 5	Systematic Theology (1 of 2)
b. 28, f. 6	Systematic Theology (2 of 2)
b. 29, f. 1	Misc. Notes (1 of 7)
b. 29, f. 2	Misc. Notes (2 of 7)
b. 29, f. 3	Misc. Notes (3 of 7)
b. 29, f. 4	Misc. Notes (4 of 7)
b. 29, f. 5	Misc. Notes (5 of 7)
b. 29, f. 6	Misc. Notes (6 of 7)
b. 29, f. 7	Misc. Notes (7 of 7)

**Series IV: Writings**

b. 30, f. 1	Article: "What It Means To Follow Christ" - published in <i>The Baptist Herald</i>	No date
b. 30, f. 2	Essays: regarding the Ashanti (African people)	No date
b. 30, f. 7	Essays: regarding religion in West Africa	No date
b. 30, f. 3-6	Essays: written at Yale Divinity School, including regarding history of Christian doctrine, Christian theology, Social ethics	circa 1928-1930
b. 30, f. 8	Essays: written at Yale Divinity School, including regarding Christian theology, the Trinity, "The Religious Thought of Douglas Clyde Macintosh"	circa 1928-1930
b. 30, f. 9	Essays: including regarding religion of American Negro slave, Morality and Religion, Ethics and Eschatology in the Teachings of Jesus	No date
b. 30, f. 10	Essays: including "The Conversion of a Skeptic", Religious Epistemology, "Religion and Ethics"	No date
b. 30, f. 11	Lectures on Paul,	No date
b. 31, f. 1	Master's thesis: "Representative Negro Baptist Preachers"	1957
b. 31, f. 2	"The Religion of the American Negro Slave" (dissertation prepared for Yale Ph.D. - degree not completed)	1940

## Series V: Related to Organizations / Institutions

b. 32, f. 1	Regarding plans for church buildings	1955, 1976
b. 32, f. 2	First Baptist Institutional Church, St. Petersburg, Florida	1946–1956
b. 32, f. 3	First Baptist Church, Centralia and Richmond, Virginia	1950–1989
b. 32, f. 4	Bethany Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio	1964, 1971
b. 32, f. 5	Bethel Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida	1923, 1927
b. 32, f. 6	Second Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio	1961
b. 32, f. 7	Shiloh Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.	1976–1977
b. 32, f. 8	First Baptist Church, Chillicothe, Ohio	1954–1974
b. 32, f. 9	Tabernacle Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia	1930, 1957
b. 32, f. 10-11	Virginia Union University, Summer Seminar	1965–1970
b. 33, f. 1	Virginia Union University, including regarding chapel services, retreat, Ministerial Fellowship	1967–1977
b. 33, f. 2	Virginia Union University - workshop on preaching, memorial service for John Malcus Ellison	1976, 1979



**Series VI: Personal Items and Memorabilia**

b. 33, f. 3	Biographical Information Including regarding 50th wedding anniversary (Nellie S. Carter, wife), daughter Symone Carter, honorary degree from Virginia Union University, retirement from First Baptist Church, Richmond, article in <i>Richmond News Leader</i>	1963
b. 33, f. 4	Journal / writing book / personal notes	no date
b. 33, f. 5	King James Version Bible, personal copy	
b. 33, f. 6	Pastoral records - weddings and funerals (3 bound volumes)	1949–1990
b. 33, f. 7	Correspondence, including letters in search of teaching positions and to Yale Divinity School professors	1932–1945
b. 33, f. 8	Correspondence, primarily related to Baptist Church and Virginia Union University	1952–1995
b. 34, f. 1	Photographs, primarily from Carter's years at Yale Divinity School, including portraits of YDS professors, Carter with fellow students	circa 1928-1930
b. 34, f. 2	Photographs, including from 90th birthday and with deacons of First Baptist Church, Richmond	1992–1994
b. 34, f. 3	Greeting cards received from family and friends	
b. 34, f. 4	Favorite hymns	
b. 34, f. 5-6	Prayers and Invocations	
b. 34, f. 7	Diplomas North High School, Columbus, Ohio (1923); Ohio State University (B.A., 1927); Yale Divinity School (B.D., 1930); Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (Master of Theology, 1957); Virginia Union University (D.D., 1981)	1923–1981

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

African American clergy  
African American preaching

### **Names**

Carter, Samuel Moss, 1904-1999