Allan Rohan Crite Oral History, 1977: Finding Aid

African American Episcopal Historical Collection
Virginia Theological Seminary Archives
Bishop Payne Library
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OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title: Allan Rohan Crite Oral History

Collection Date(s): 1977

Extent and Forms of Material: One 64-page transcript

Creator: Allan Rohan Crite, Linda Chisholm

Abstract: This collection consists of a 64-page transcription of two oral history interviews with the artist-historian Allan Rohan Crite, conducted on June 1, 1977 by Linda Chisholm for the Oral History Collection at Columbia University. Crite is well-known for his work in which he recorded the people, architecture, and daily life of African-Americans in Boston’s South End/Roxbury neighborhoods in the 1930s and 1940s in his oil paintings, watercolors, drawings and prints. Additionally, he is especially renowned for his liturgical art that dealt with a variety of religious themes.


Collection Number: RG A13
INFORMATION FOR USERS OF THE COLLECTION

Conditions Governing Access: The collection is open for research use.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use: Permission required to cite, quote, and reproduce. Contact Columbia University, Oral History Collection for information.

Preferred Citation: Allan Rohan Crite Oral History Transcript, African American Episcopal Historical Collection, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, box number X, folder number XX, digital file number XXXXXXXX

IN-DEPTH INFORMATION ABOUT THE COLLECTION

Biographical History:
Allan Rohan Crite was born on March 20, 1910 in Plainfield, New Jersey. When he was still an infant, he moved with his parents, Oscar William and Annamae Palmer Crite to Boston, Massachusetts. As a child he was strongly encouraged by his mother to study the arts and expand his talents. He studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Massachusetts School of Art, and Boston University before graduating from Harvard University with a Bachelor of Arts in 1968. Later in his life, Crite was awarded honorary doctorates from Suffolk University and Emmanuel College for his contributions as an artist and historian. Additionally, in May 2004, he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa from the Virginia Theological Seminary.

Crite has spent his entire career in Boston, working with agencies such as Works Progress Administration and with the Department of the Navy as a technical illustrator. He is a renowned artist, famous for his documenting of African-Americans through scenes of everyday life in his “neighborhood paintings,” his illustrations of Negro spirituals, and his images of religious themes. As a lifelong member and lay leader in the Episcopal Church, Crite is especially recognized for his liturgical art and writings, having published several texts in conjunction with the church. In addition to showcasing his works at the Crite House-Museum, which also serves as his studio and home, Crite’s work can be found on display at museums such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Corcoran Gallery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Institution, the Art Institute of Chicago, Boston’s Athenaeum, the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists and the Museum of Fine Arts. Also, his work was recently showcased at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Washington in the exhibition, “Allan Rohan Crite: Artist-Reporter of the African American Community,” in 2001.
Bibliography of Allan Rohan Crite resources located at the Bishop Payne Library, Virginia Theological Seminary:


Scope and Content:

This collection consists of a 64-page transcription of two oral history interviews with the artist-historian Allan Rohan Crite, conducted on June 1, 1977 by Linda Chisholm for the Oral History Collection at Columbia University. The interviews encompassed a variety of subjects. The first interview examined Crite’s family history, their involvement with the Episcopal Church with groups such as the Plymouth Brethren, his educational background and early experiences, and his research into the history of the Episcopal Church that influenced his art. In particular, he discusses his first introduction to art by his mother, the commencement of his formal training at the Children’s Art Center in Boston, courses he took at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and his time at the Boston Latin School and Harvard. The second interview focuses more on his current projects including a new initiative designed to educate youths on the history of different ethnic groups, from African-American to Native American to African.
Finding Aids: An earlier version of this finding aid was written by Kimberly Robinson in March 2006. Danleigh Kaplan updated and revised this finding aid in March 2007.

Acquisition Information: This collection was a gift of Linda Chisholm of Nyack, New York, a historian active in Anglican and Episcopal educational organizations, 2001.


Related Archival Materials:


Related Artifacts:
Allan Rohan Crite Self-Portrait, African American Episcopal Historical Collection, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives (Collection # RG A24)

Access Points:
Crite, Allan Rohan, 1910-
African American Episcopalians
African American artists –Interviews.
Art, American –20th century.
Boston (Mass.)

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