



Printing presses, Claflin University, South Carolina, 1899 (Library of Congress)

CALL FOR PAPERS

BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHIA: PRINT/CULTURE/ART

April 26-27, 2019
University of Delaware

A symposium hosted by the
Center for Material Culture Studies

in collaboration with
UD Library, Museums & Press and the
College of Arts and Sciences' Paul R. Jones Initiative

Keynote speakers:
Jacqueline Goldsby & Meredith McGill
Tia Blassingame

Printer-in-Residence:
Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr.

Please send abstracts of 300 words, with a brief CV,
by October 5, 2018, to materialculture@udel.edu.
Papers, artist talks, and other presentation formats
welcome.

Organized by Jesse Erickson (Special Collections &
English), Laura Helton (English) & Curtis Small (Special
Collections)

The question "What is a black book?" is implicit in the work of scholars and curators who examine histories of African American print production and reading. It is equally germane to artists and printers experimenting with the book and other print forms today. To explore this question, "Black Bibliographia: Print/Culture/Art" will host an exchange of ideas across longstanding divides of discipline and practice. The symposium invites participation from individuals invested in books and other print objects as material forms, aesthetic inventions, circulating texts, and repositories of design. In this way, "Black Bibliographia" aims to build on a growing body of work in African American print culture—already rich in nineteenth-century studies—while also inviting reassessment of the material life of black bookmaking and print production in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The purpose of "Black Bibliographia" is to consider a number of queries: What are the aesthetics of black books, conceived in the broadest terms, and how can we bring book history, visual studies, and material culture into closer collaboration? In what ways has black textuality challenged the boundaries of print forms past and present, and how do the book arts make such interventions visible? How does attention to the innovations of print workers—from typesetters to booksellers to mimeograph operators—reframe black textuality? From the strategic adoption of typographic conventions by black printers and publishers of the early twentieth century, to the radical break from those conventions in the alternative press of the 1960s and '70s, how do the arts of the book speak to our conceptions and constructions of blackness?

"Black Bibliographia" represents the second biennial conference sponsored by the Center for Material Culture Studies. We invite participants from all fields—book artists, librarians, archivists, collectors, art historians, editors, digital humanists, and scholars working across the disciplines of literature, design, history, and Black Studies—to join us in critically investigating the past and futures of black bookmaking, paper arts, print cultures, and technologies of transmission, reproduction, and reading.