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4-2020

## The Charles Chesnutt Archive: Charles Chesnutt and the Black Community who Aided Him

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Swift, Bianca and Swift, Bianca, "The Charles Chesnutt Archive: Charles Chesnutt and the Black Community who Aided Him" (2020). *UCARE Research Products*. 186.

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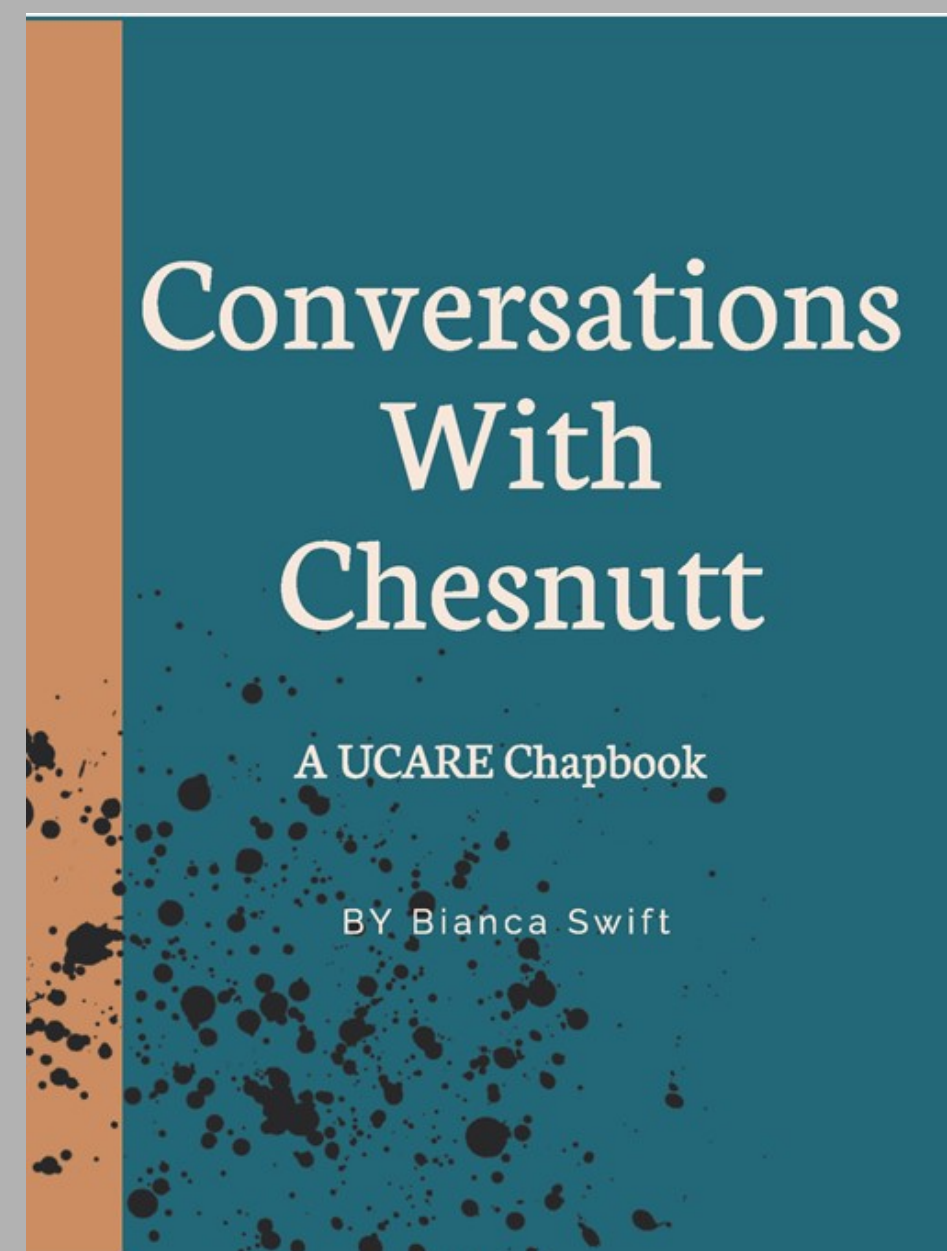


# The Charles Chesnutt Archive:

Charles Chesnutt and the Black Community Who Aided Him

## The Chapbook:

As I have made a habit of creating poems utilizing the themes and quotes, I see in Chesnutt's correspondence and essays I have decided to compile a few of the archive's favorites in a chapbook titled, *Conversations with Chesnutt*. The poems found in this chapbook examine the intersection between Chesnutt's beliefs and writings and the more modern lens of my own experiences with race as I have come to know it as a black woman in America.



\* A digital copy of this Chapbook can be found in the Digital commons

## Research Question:

How Charles Chesnutt interacted with other black intellectuals, particularly W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and Kelly Miller, had significant bearing on Chesnutt's views socially and politically, as expressed in his essays, speeches, and other statements.



## The Results:

Throughout my research I have found not only results that confirm my hypothesis in terms of the content of Chesnutt's essays, but also results that suggest that Chesnutt would not have been able to publish many of the essays he was able to, without the help of the black intellectuals he often interacted with:

### Major Themes:

One of the major themes found in Chesnutt's correspondence is the Negro's access to voter rights. He discusses this often, specifically with Booker T. Washington, who wasn't always in agreement about the immediate need for such rights.

### The Letter:

In a letter sent June 27, 1903, as a response to a correspondence that has yet to be uncovered, Chesnutt discusses at length his opinion on Negro voter rights saying,

“I am squarely opposed to any restriction of the franchise in the South... It is wholly and solely an effort ...to deprive the negro of every vestige of power and every particle of representation.”

This was one of many conversations Chesnutt would have with Booker T. Washington over the necessity of voter rights.

### The Essay:

The essay, “The Disfranchisement of the Negro”. Which was published in Washington's own collection, *The Negro Problem*, also discusses voter rights. In this essay he discusses a topic nearly verbatim from this previous letter saying in the essay,

“they may be allowed to live and to do certain kinds of manual labor through the favor of the Southern whites, but their guaranteed rights will be a thing of the past.”

This echoes his letter:

“they may be allowed to live and to do certain kinds of manual labor through the favor of the Southern whites, but their guaranteed rights will be a thing of the past.”

### Other Results:

On November 15, 1930 Chesnutt writes a letter to Walter F. White, in which it is suggested that the publication of Chesnutt's essay, “Post-Bellum-Pre-Harlem,” in *The Colophon*, was urged along by Walter White.

## The Process:

Example of spreadsheet:

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