

# Florence Barber Diary

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1902

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## Title Statement

Florence Barber DiaryGuide to the Florence Barber Diary SC 00834

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

**Unit ID**

SC 00834

**Unit ID**

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**Unit Date**

1902

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Barber, Florence A. (1863-1941)

**Extent**

0.01 Linear Foot

**Extent**

1 volume.

**Repository**

Special Collections Research Center

## Administrative Information

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**Acquisition Information:**

Purchase.

**Processing Information:**

Accessioned and processed in October 2009 by Ute Schechter. Additional description provided by Pat Overton, SCRC Staff, in November-December 2009.

**Preferred Citation:**

Florence Barber Diary, Special Collections Research Center, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

## Biographical Information:

Florence Barber lived in Portsmouth, Virginia at the turn of the 20th century. She was the granddaughter of Solomon Northup and the daughter of Margaret Anne Stanton. She was a teacher and participated in activities related to African American culture.

## Scope and Contents

This diary was formerly described as an unattributed diary and entitled: Diary (Portsmouth, Va.), 1901, but has now been attributed to Florence Barber of Norfolk, Virginia. In brief daily entries she talks about the weather, chores, and social life, trips to town, church, attending meetings, etc. In August she went to visit churches and schools in Georgia and Alabama, like Atlanta University and Spelman College, both historically black schools. She also mentions teaching music, attending educational meetings in Portsmouth and being elected president of the local YMCA. September 3 is the last entry in this diary.

Research conducted by William and Mary students in 2011 pointed to Florence Barber as the owner and author of this diary. Their research also corrected that the diary was actually from 1902, not 1901 and that the author lived in Norfolk, not Portsmouth, Virginia. The diary was transcribed and made available online in 2012.

For a more detailed description from staff as well as description and excerpts from the diary provided by the seller, please see the folder link below.

## Keywords

Diaries

African American women--Diaries

African American women--Education

African American women--History--Sources

African Americans--Virginia--History--20th century

African Americans--Virginia--Portsmouth--History

Women--Diaries

Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A

## Description of Subordinate Components

**Diary****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/212586**Unit Date** 1902**Mixed materials** Small Collections Box 46 (Box)**Container** 1 (folder)**Scope and Contents**

The following description was provided by the seller and has not been verified for accuracy:

Daily entries begin on Wednesday, January 1, 1901: She offers good accounts of weather day by day. She is a seamstress and dresses dolls, one for Alma Dogan and another for B.'s. She collects money from individuals who call and she also keeps the accounts for, it appears, the YWCA. She purchases material in town and makes aprons at night for people. She has a wide network of friends and acquaintances. On January 30 there was a fire that destroyed the Columbia Atlantic Hotel and other buildings. Collects board bill from some so probably rents out rooms. Mondays takes in washing and ironing. February 22 had a terrible storm that knocked out telegraph and telephone lines. People were killed. All trains and the mail deliveries were delayed. March 1 there was a street car strike and no cars ran all that day. March 30 went to Oceana to Rev. Augusta's Church. May 8 wrote that Martinegne (Island?) was destroyed by volcanic eruption. May 20 was reelected president of the YWCA July 4 She met with Dr. Mischeaux who came down to Portsmouth from Washington DC. August 4 left for a trip to Atlanta. Visited Atlanta University to attend a conference (YMCA). While on this week long trip, took an excursion to Tuskegee, Alabama. September 3 is the last entry in this diary. In summary it appears that she has a daughter named Alma who lives with her and attends school. There is a continuity throughout the diary that would lead you to believe that she manages or runs the house owned and lived in by a doctor and other boarders. The following description and excerpts were provided by the seller: She talks about daily events, mending aprons and dresses along with what was happening in Portsmouth at that time. She mentions being friends and meeting with several well known African Americans including the Norcom family, Bishop A.L. Gaines and others. She talks about Portsmouth and several fires breaking out during the year and the damage it caused. The majority of her entries are dealing with the YMCA, of which she was the President and as the President in September she travels to Atlanta for a conference. She describes meeting at Atlanta University and getting take tours of several Black Colleges in Atlanta and Tuskegee as well as visiting several well known Black Churches in Atlanta. It is really a remarkable piece of African American and Virginia history. I have not been able to identify the name of the woman who kept the diary although she mentions, the Dr and another woman named Alma quite a bit, and seem to either be family or very close friends. It is all handwritten. It is missing the covers but is in otherwise excellent condition. Very scarce to find a great early diary like this by an African American Woman. She writes very beautifully throughout and was an incredibly interesting woman." The following excerpts were also provided by the seller and have not been verified for accuracy: "I was busy arranging for YMCA reception, the first in our new building which proved quite a success. Worthy Moore was our first caller then, Mr Marsden for parade. I did not go to church but remained home and cooked our turkey sent from Pulaski by Jennie. Remained home until evening and then went down to Corps meeting, had installation of officers by Mr Fuller Quite a pleasant day in the evening, Mrs Lynch called and told me about the concert I went down to the Bazaar and remaining until late spent, .20 and ran for a table collected, .05 and made apron I went with Alma to market and purchased my meal, .75 and took the aprons to the gentlemen. It was quite a pleasant day, made 2 aprons and done my mending. More of us went to church except Mr Marsden. We were to go to Portsmouth to the Armstrong Association but it rained Between midnight and Friday the Fire occurred, burning down the Columbia, Atlantic Hotel and other buildings. Went down to lend a hand circle and to arrange about my printing and then over to the Bazaar and got my table Meeting of Bible Union but I did not go for it was snowing and sleeting. I remained home and served all day. It rained all day and was very cold and raw, in the north the storms were terrible, many telegraph and telephone wires were down and many persons were killed. All trains were late. There was a street car strike and no cars was run all day. We were busy cleaning up the bedrooms and I did not go down in the city, received a letter from Jennie, the strike was still on. I had my call meeting for YMCA made several visits and Mrs Lynch turned over to us \$6.43 and all together turned over \$6.95 and purchased a spoon. The Ladies served up the Ice Cream. The strike was still on. Did not go to Missionary Meeting went up to Mrs Minkin A lovely day I expected to go to Portsmouth but was disappointed and remained home and cleaned the beds. A lovely day but quite windy, I went to Portsmouth to call on Mrs Becket and Josie Norcom, Robert Compler called in the evening. A lovely Easter day, warm and pleasant in the morning. I went down to Oceana to Rev Augusta's church had a lovely time. Finished my dress skirt, Miss Gordman was to be married. Nannie Paige was burried at 3 o'clock Gave Mrs Burney her music lesson and then went down to my meeting joined the Esther Chapter A beautiful day, the education meeting was at Hampton. I finished ironing then went down to meeting. A lovely day it was commencement at Hampton and Mr Marsden went down.I intended to go but remained home and served. It was a very pretty day. Mr and Mrs Bracket of Harpers Ferry came to dinner with us and remained the day and left on the 6 o'clock boat. A fire broke out on Princess Anne Ave and destroyed 12 houses and Mrs Luckers house caught fire, was put out. Alma and I sent over to see the first and Mrs Lucker Spelling match at night at the YMCA we

had a very pleasant time and quite a crowd out, made \$4.95 or 5.25 and a beautiful night. Martinique destroyed by Volcanic Eruption Meeting at YMCA I attended the meeting in company with Mrs Moore and was re-elected President. Had quite a spirited meeting...Relief corps and my other meeting but did not attend either as I went to Mount Hermon to visit Miss Julie Howell. I did not go to church but Dr Did, Rev A.L. Gaines preached (Bishop Gaines was a well known African American Minister on the east coast) Decoration Day I went out and carried the flowers to the cemetery and then was quite sick. Went over to Mrs Whites as the baby died. It was a very pleasant day and at night, the Langston Circle presented his portrait to the YMCA, Mr Marsden and I had to address them. John Barber came home from Manilla on a surprise. I went downtown and purchased my dress black and white. A Man came to the take the picture of the house and I received a letter from Dr Mischeaux. Went on the Cape Charles Line..Mr Gray shot Dr Batts and killed him at 8 o'clock at night. Conference convened at Hampton but I did not go down Dr Went down to Conference at Hampton and I served more all day... then Dr Took us to an Ice Cream Salon We left for Atlanta at 9:05 o'clock from Portsmouth We arrived in Atlanta at 7:55 o'clock in the evening. Went direct to our boarding place, had supper and then to bed In the morning we took the car for Atlanta University where we met, Mr Bell of NY, YMCA who showed us through the University and Grounds. We then went to Spellman and from there to the auditorium and then to Bethel Church in the afternoon, received my trunk. We went at 2 o'clock at the opening meeting of the congress and heard many fine speeches. Went to Wheat St Baptist Church in the afternoon. Went out to the penitentiary and then to Clark and Gammon and the Baptist College then out to the Auditorium. Quite pleasant in Atlanta, we went to the meeting in the morning and over to the Capitol and spent a pleasant time. Then to the Concert at night, it was quite fine. Quite a rainy day, I went with the excursionists to Tuskegee Alabama for \$2.50. Met Mrs Professor Green who showed us through the different buildings after dinner. Then we went to the chapel and heard the different speeches and left for Atlanta at 6 o'clock Still on the train and a wreck occurred about 3 o'clock and we had to lay over for about 2 hours. I went to Portsmouth with Dr and Alma and we remained over to the carnival at night A large parade in Portsmouth on account of Carnival and fireworks at night, but we did not go."