Descriptive Summary

Creator: Vivian, C. T.
Title: C.T. and Octavia Vivian papers, circa 1923-2013
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 1286
Extent: 51 linear ft. (53 boxes) and 2 oversized papers (OP)
Abstract: Papers of African American civil rights activist and minister C.T. Vivian and his wife Octavia including correspondence, printed material, photographs, subject files, and audiovisual material.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access
Special restrictions apply: In-process collection. As of April 2017, this collection will be closed to researchers, and will reopen when processing is complete.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction
All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

Separated Material
In Emory's holdings are books formerly owned by C.T. Vivian. These materials may be located in the Emory University online catalog by searching for: Vivian, C.T., former owner.

Source
Acquired 2014.

Citation
[after identification of item(s)], C.T. and Octavia Vivian papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Processing
Unprocessed collection.

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Collection Description

Biographical Note
Cordy Tindell (C.T.) Vivian, African American civil rights activist and minister, was born on July 28, 1924, to Robert and Euzetta (Tindell) Vivian in Boonville, Illinois. He was educated in the desegregated public schools of McComb, Illinois, and attended college at Western Illinois University. Following college, Vivian moved to Peoria, Illinois, where he became involved with nonviolent direct action efforts such as sit-ins, to end de facto segregation of public spaces in the city. In 1955, he began attending American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, and become more deeply involved in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. In the 1960s, Vivian participated in the Freedom Rides and joined the staff of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), helping to organize campaigns in Albany, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; St. Augustine, Florida; and Selma, Alabama. Vivian is the founder of the Anti-Klan Network (later known as the Center for Democratic Renewal), Seminary without Walls (a program of Shaw University), and the Black Action Strategies and Information Center, as well as author of the book Black Power and the American Myth.

Octavia (Geans) Vivian was born in Pontiac, Michigan, to Leslie and Alvier Geans. She obtained a degree in social work from Eastern Michigan University and went on to work for the DeSota Bass Courts Housing Project in Dayton, Ohio, and as the women's and girl's supervisor for the George Washington Carver Community Center in Peoria, Illinois. C.T. and Octavia married in Peoria in 1953. Following the couple's move to Georgia, Octavia Vivian worked to desegregate the public school of DeKalb County and became the first African American deputy voter registrar in the county. In 1970, she published Coretta, the first autobiography of Coretta Scott King. Octavia Vivian passed away in 2011.

Scope and Content Note
The collection consists of papers of C.T. and Octavia Vivian including correspondence, printed material, photographs, subject files, and audiovisual material. Approximately half of the collection consists of binders, arranged by subject, which contain printed material, correspondence, minutes and reports, photographs, and other documents relating to the subject. Binders document civil rights figures such as Ralph David Abernathy, Septima Clark, Jesse Jackson, Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King, Joseph and Evelyn Lowery, Rosa Parks, Hosea and Juanita Williams, and Andrew Young. They also document organizations and events such as the Anti-Klan Network/Center for Democratic Renewal; Black Action Strategies and Information Center; the March on Washington; the Poor People's Campaign and Resurrection City; the Selma to Montgomery March; Seminary without Walls; and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Arrangement Note
Unprocessed collection.