The Rare Book collection, approximately 14,000 volumes,is comprised of books published before 1900; books published in limited editions, valuable first editions and autographed books. It contains a sizeable collection of abolitionist literature publications by and about the Presidents of Tuskegee University and George Washington Carver. An extensive collection of pamphlets dealing primarily with racial issues can also be found in the collection.

Most notably among this collection is the first edition Phillis Wheatley’s *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, 1773, the first book published by an African-American author. Phillis Wheatley broke barriers as the first American black woman poet to be published, opening the door for future black authors. [James Weldon Johnson](http://www.ask.com/wiki/James_Weldon_Johnson?qsrc=3044), author, politician, diplomat and one of the first African-American professors at [New York University](http://www.ask.com/wiki/New_York_University?qsrc=3044), wrote of Wheatley that "she is not a great American poet—and in her day there were no great American poets—but she is an important American poet. Her importance, if for no other reason, rests on the fact that, save one, she is the first in order of time of all the women poets of America. And she is among the first of all American poets to issue a volume."[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Other collections include 2 volumes of *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* Doris Ullman and **Julia Peterkin,** New York: Robert O. Ballou, 1933 (1st editions) and 2 volumes of same but smaller size (1st editions)**. Valued at over $125,000.00, these** are definitely a remarkable work. Ullman and her cohort Peterkin headed south when the depression was biting hardest in a chauffeur-driven limousine to make a photographic record of the lives of first and second generation "free blacks". The documentary record they produced centered on the Gullah. Also, found within these stacks are books by both Stanley, Henry M. (1st editions) (1909) *The Autobiography of Henry M. Stanley*, and Livingstone, David (1st edition) (1872) [*Explorations in Africa*](http://www.abebooks.com/servlet/BookDetailsPL?bi=9924460211&searchurl=an%3Ddavid%2Blivingstone%26amp%3Bkn%3Dafrica%26amp%3Bsts%3Dt). Some of our pamphlets can only be found in this room. Finally, the Rare Book collection has older books that date back to the 16th Century or earlier, first editions, autographed copies, approximately 500 pamphlets, yearbooks and thesis. Both of these collections are non-circulating collection. All of the books and pamphlets are cataloged in OCLC and are accessible to patrons, student, faculty, staff and researchers. Some of the fragile pamphlets have been digitalized.

1. James Weldon Johnson. [*The Book of American Negro Poetry*,](http://www.bartleby.com/269/1000.html#3) Referenced 28 APR 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)