



Screening of *The Jazz Ambassadors* with Park University

On **Monday, February 11 at 6:00 p.m.**, the National Archives in partnership with Park University, will host a film screening of *The Jazz Ambassadors*. This program will take place in the Jenkin and Barbara David Theater in Alumni Hall on the Park University campus, 8700 NW River Park Drive, Parkville, MO. [Reservations](#) are requested for this **free program**.

In 1956, America announced a new Cold War weapon to combat the U.S.S.R. — jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie and Dave Brubeck, along with their racially-integrated bands, would cross the globe to counter negative Soviet propaganda about racial inequality in America. But the unfolding Civil Rights movement back home forced these cultural ambassadors into a moral bind — How could they promote a tolerant image of America abroad when equality remained an unrealized dream? *The Jazz Ambassadors* is the untold story of America’s coolest weapon in the Cold War: how jazz musicians fought back, winning Civil Rights a voice on the world stage when it needed one most. This program is offered in collaboration with the Greater Kansas City Black History Study Group, Kansas City PBS, and the American Jazz Museum.



Above: Musician Louis Armstrong on the stage in Accra, The Gold Coast (now Ghana), in 1956. Trombonist James “Trummy” Young and clarinetist Edmond Hall play behind him. Image courtesy of the Louis Armstrong House Museum.

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By providing your address, you grant the National Archives at Kansas City permission to send you information about special events, and programs. Per the Privacy Act of 1974, we will not share your personal information with third parties.

February 2019

Inside This Issue

FILM SCREENING OF <i>THE JAZZ AMBASSADORS</i>	1
SPENCER CAVE LECTURE WITH DR. ARNOLD RAMPERSAD	2
HIDDEN TREASURES FROM THE STACKS	3-5

Upcoming Events

Unless noted, all events are held at the National Archives 400 W. Pershing Road Kansas City, MO 64108

- **FEB. 11 - 6:00 P.M.**
*FILM: *THE JAZZ AMBASSADORS*
- **FEB. 18 - FACILITY CLOSED: WASHINGTON’S BIRTHDAY/PRESIDENTS’ DAY**
- **FEB. 25 - 7:00 P.M.**
*LECTURE: *JACKIE ROBINSON, AMERICAN* WITH DR. ARNOLD RAMPERSAD

*DENOTES ACTIVITY IS OFFSITE.

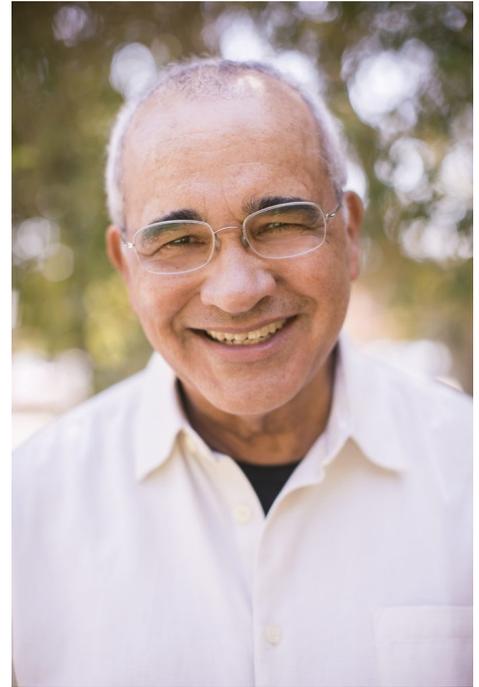
Spencer Cave Lecture: Dr. Arnold Rampersad to Discuss *Jackie Robinson, American*

On **Monday, February 25 at 7:00 p.m.**, the National Archives in partnership with Park University, will host **Dr. Arnold Rampersad** who will discuss ***Jackie Robinson, American***. This program will take place at the GEM Theater, 1615 East 18th Street, Kansas City, MO. [Reservations](#) are requested for this **free program**.

In recognition of Jackie Robinson's 100th birthday in 2019 (January 31), Rampersad, will present a discussion on the life and legacy of Robinson as part of Park University's 18th annual Spencer Cave Black History Month Lecture. Rampersad's lecture, *Jackie Robinson, American*, will probe the ways in which Robinson's story is a truly American story, one that reflects both the highs and lows, and the tragedies and triumphs, of U.S. history and culture. It will also illustrate the capacity of the individual American, as exemplified by Robinson, to change the nation in the direction of justice, honor and individual success.

Robinson was the first African-American to play in Major League Baseball when he started for the Brooklyn Dodgers at first base in April 1947. Robinson played one season with the Kansas City Monarchs in 1945 in the Negro American League.

Rampersad authored *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* after being selected by Robinson's widow, Rachel, to tell her husband's story. Among his other books include *Days of Grace: A Memoir*, co-authored by late tennis star and activist Arthur Ashe, and books on W.E.B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, and Langston Hughes. A winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award in biography and autobiography in 1986, Rampersad was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in biography in 1989, and for the National Book Award in non-fiction prose in 2007. In 2011, President Barack Obama awarded Rampersad the National Humanities Medal, an award that honors individuals or groups whose work has deepened the nation's understanding of the humanities and broadened citizens' engagement with history, literature, languages, philosophy and other humanities subjects. Rampersad earned a doctorate in English and American literature from Harvard University, and both a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts in English from Bowling Green State University. He is the Sara Hart Kimball Professor in the Humanities, Emeritus, at Stanford University.



Above: Dr. Arnold Rampersad. Image courtesy of Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University.

Park University's Spencer Cave Black History Month Lecture Series is named for Cave, a man born into slavery at the start of the Civil War. After moving to Parkville, Missouri, Cave worked for the University for more than 70 years before his death in 1947. In homage to Cave, Park University started this lecture series to expound on the many contributions African-Americans have made toward our nation's success. This program is supported by a grant from the Missouri Humanities Council and offered in partnership with the Greater Kansas City Black History Study Group, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, and Park University.

Upcoming Facility Information and Reminders

- **Monday, February 18** - Washington's Birthday/Presidents' Day Holiday - facility closed
- **Tuesday, April 2** - Election Day - the National Archives at Kansas City is a polling site. Increased foot traffic and limited parking is expected.
- **Monday, May 27** - Memorial Day Holiday - facility closed

Reminder: The National Archives at Kansas City is a Congressionally funded Federal agency. Should a lapse in appropriated Congressional funds occur, the facility will close until funding is restored. Please monitor our [website](#) and social media channels for facility information.

Hidden Treasures from the Stack

Patenting Plants in the Atomic Age

Biologists, horticulturists, farmers and other gardeners have long been interested in the genetic modification and improvement of plant species. A practice that goes back hundreds of years, plants are often grown and intentionally propagated to create healthier, stronger, more desirable features. In 1930, the Plant Patent Act was passed by President Hoover and it gave specific protection to those who undertook the time consuming and expensive work to improve a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, shrubs and ornamental plants. Beginning in the 1950s however, plant improvements caught the attention of a new audience: nuclear scientists.

On June 5, 1956, plant patent number 1481 was granted to inventor Willard Ralph Singleton and was assigned to the United States Atomic Energy Commission. At the time, Singleton was the senior geneticist at the Brookhaven National Laboratory where he directed experiments on the growth pattern of vegetables and flowers using gamma-rays from radioactive cobalt. The patent that Singleton filed was for improvements to a Carnation Plant known as the White Sim variety. The patent specifications indicate that Singleton's improvements to the plant allowed for a mutation that eradicated a noticeable "red sinus blotch" that would occur in the white bloom if the bud or flower was bruised.

What is most curious about Willard Singleton's patent is not the genetic improvements that were made to the flower and his successful reproduction of a flower that did *not* have an obvious and visual fault, but moreso it is the method by which he was able to orchestrate the mutation. Singleton claimed that the variety was developed by irradiating the White Sim plants with gamma rays from a cobalt-60 source and subsequently asexually reproducing them through cuttings grown at the laboratory.

But HOW exactly were these plants irradiated with gamma rays? Although the plant patent file does not elaborate on the specific steps taken in Singleton's lab, we now know that this process took place in what was known as a "gamma garden." Plants arranged in concentric circles were exposed to a cobalt-60 source from a remote controlled totem in the center of the field. Plants closest to the radiation source suffered the most damage or death, followed by a selection of plants that were riddled with obvious malformations. Beyond those first few sections of exposed plants lay

(Continued on page 5)

June 5, 1956

W. R. SINGLETON

Plant Pat. 1,481

CARNATION PLANT

Filed Sept. 6, 1955



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

WILLARD RALPH SINGLETON
INVENTOR.

BY

Roland A. Anderson
Attorney

Above: Patent drawing from U.S. Plant Patent 1481. Carnation Plant issued to W. R. Singleton June 5, 1956. Record Group 241, Records of the Patent and Trademark Office, 1836-1978, Plant Patent Case Files, 1930-1969, Plant Patent 1481, National Archives at Kansas City (National Archives Identifier 85571690).

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NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM FILES

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1,481

CARNATION PLANT

Willard Ralph Singleton, Suffolk County, N. Y., assignor to the United States of America as represented by the United States Atomic Energy Commission

Application September 6, 1955, Serial No. 532,812

1 Claim. (Cl. 47—60)

This application relates to a new and distinct variety of carnation plant.

The White Sim variety of carnation is characterized by otherwise generally white flowers whose petals develop red sinus blotches often after the epidermal layer has been bruised. The present carnation is a mutant of the White Sim variety and does not have that fault. The White Sim carnation is an unpatented variety.

The present variety of carnation was developed by irradiating plants of the White Sim variety of carnation with gamma rays from a cobalt-60 source. The plant has been asexually reproduced through cuttings grown at the Brookhaven National Laboratory at Upton, New York. Two generations have been reproduced in this way and have bred true.

The plant is shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a view of the entire plant showing its habit of growth,

Figure 2 is a view of the flower produced by the plant and

Figure 3 is a view for comparison of the flower of the parent White Sim variety of carnation showing the red sinus blotch.

The new plant is described as follows:

Parentage: White Sim variety of carnation.

Blooming habit: Continuous.

FLOWER

Bud:

Size.—Large; similar to White Sim variety.

Form.—Blunt conical.

Color.—Glaucous green.

Sepals.—United to form calyx.

Calyx.—Firm, subcylindric.

Peduncle.—Short.

Opening.—Opens fully and readily.

Bloom:

Size.—Large, of the order of 2½ to 3 inches.

Borne.—Singly as grown commercially. Axillary buds usually removed to produce a single terminal flower.

2

Stem.—Long, strong.

Form.—Full, flat, slightly high center.

Petalage.—Fully double. Approximately 50 petals per flower.

Color.—Pure white.

Variegations.—None.

Discolorations.—None. Usual red sinus blotch of White Sim variety absent.

Petals:

Texture.—Medium thick.

Appearance.—Wavy.

Form.—Obovate entire, slightly dentate.

Arrangement.—Imbricated.

Persistence.—Very persistent until flower withers. Do not drop.

Fragrance.—Slight. Typical carnation odor.

Lastingness.—On the plant, very long. As cut flower, very long.

Genital organs: Usually sterile.

Stamens, pollen, styles, stigmas.—Absent.

Ovaries.—Do not develop.

Fruit: None.

PLANT

Form: Shrub 1–3' high. Stalks branched—generally with several in a clump.

Growth: Very vigorous, upright to sprawly if not staked. Compact, branching.

Foliage:

Leaflets.—None.

Size.—Medium to small.

Quantity.—Abundant.

Color.—Glaucous green, both upper and lower surfaces.

Shape.—Lanceolate, almost grass-like.

Texture.—Leathery, smooth.

Edge.—Entire.

Serration.—None.

Leaf stem.—None. Leaves are sessile.

Stipules.—Clasping the stalk.

Wood: Almost, but not truly woody. Herbaceous.

Thorns: Absent.

In general, it may be said that the plant I claim as new is similar to its parent except for the flower.

Having described and illustrated a new and distinct variety of carnation plant, I wish it to be understood that the distinctive feature I claim as new is as set forth in the appended claim.

I claim:

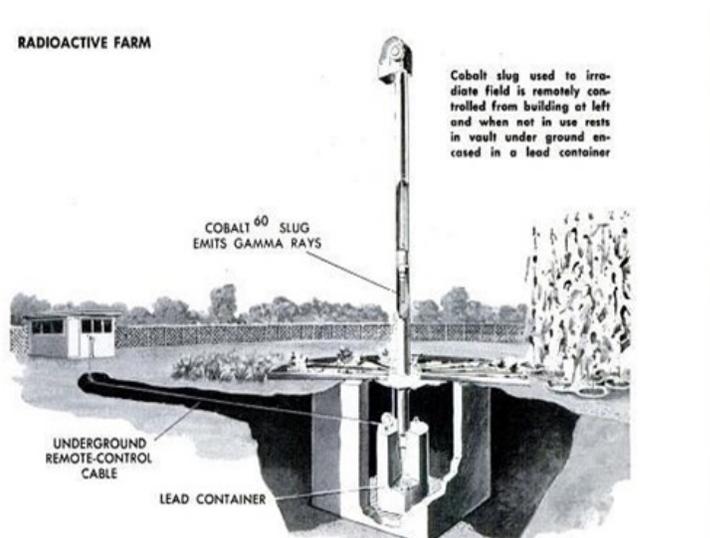
The new and distinct variety of carnation plant as herein described and illustrated, characterized particularly by its generally white flowers which are completely free of the red sinus blotch even when bruised characteristic of the white flowers of the variety "White Sim" (unpatented).

No references cited

(Continued from page 3)

the bulk of the nuclear scientists' work. Plants that appeared to survive 'unharm'd' were examined much more closely to identify exactly what genetic mutations had occurred and whether or not the plants could be successfully reproduced after the mutations.

Research into the methods for irradiating plants with gamma rays for the purpose of intentional genetic mutations brought to light a turning point in the post-World War II Nuclear Age that the United States found itself. Under the suggestion of President Eisenhower, atomic energy could be used to serve the peaceful pursuits of mankind, specifically through the agricultural and medicinal fields of study. It was this proposition that led to the rise of "Atomic Gardens," Singleton's improved carnation, and the study of radioactively mutated plants; a diverse scientific field of study which still exists today. Search the National Archives catalog and learn more about the patent files [here](#).



Above: Image of the gamma field at the Brookhaven National Laboratory (left) and a depiction of how the radioactive source was oriented within the field (right). Date unknown. Image courtesy of gardenhistorygirl.com.



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

KANSAS CITY

GENERAL INFORMATION: The National Archives is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Closed on weekends and Federal holidays. Hours are subject to change due to special programs and weather. The National Archives is located at 400 West Pershing Road, Kansas City, Missouri, 64108.

The National Archives at Kansas City is home to historical records dating from the 1820s to the 1990s created or received by Federal agencies in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. For more information, call 816-268-8000, email kansascity.educate@nara.gov or visit www.archives.gov/kansas-city. Tweet us @KCArchives or #KCArchives. Find and follow us on Instagram at: [kansascity.archives](https://www.instagram.com/kansascity.archives). Find us on Facebook www.facebook.com/nationalarchiveskansascity.