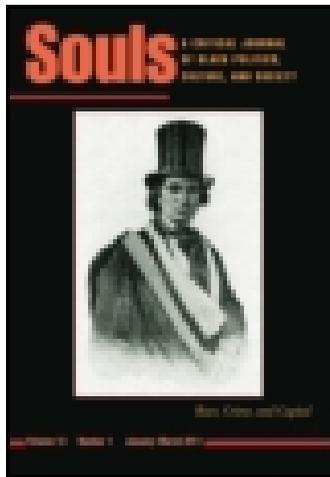


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### Introduction

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# Introduction

**Garrett A. Felber**

As discussed in the introduction to Volume 12, Number 1, an issue which marked a resurgence in scholarship on Malcolm X, information on the Black nationalist leader has been at times mercurial and scarce although his influence has remained constant. As the first issue offered new insights and ways of understanding Malcolm X, the second gives a glimpse at the primary sources which have enabled such an interpretive renewal. From a variety of government files, archival resources, as well as several oral histories produced through Columbia University's Malcolm X Project, this issue offers primary source material spanning over thirty years of Malcolm's life, most of which has never been published before.

Although some of the letters and files contained within have been cited previously in works by Louis DeCaro and Peter Goldman, they have never been widely available to scholars in their original form. The documents represent various stages of Malcolm X's political and personal development. In addition to the words of Malcolm himself, given before a Queens County Court concerning his 1964 eviction, the issue provides intimate reminiscences of one of his closest associates, James 67X Shabazz; a former New York police officer in charge of wiretapping the offices of MMI and the OAAU, Gerry Fulcher; and one of the three men convicted of his assassination in 1965, Thomas 15X Johnson. A 1929 Michigan State Police report even gives a voice to Malcolm's father, Earl Little, who was interviewed by troopers following the arson of his Lansing home several years before his death. FBI reports reveal the growing

political involvement of Betty Shabazz during Malcolm's time abroad, as well as the growing tensions with the Muhammad family. Finally, from the Ken McCormick Collection at the Library of Congress, letters from author Alex Haley unearth the often obfuscated composition of the *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Each set of documents is prefaced by a brief note on its significance and the historical context in which it was produced.

Due to copyright restrictions governing many archival collections, the sources contained are by no means exhaustive or even fully representative of the new wealth of information which has recently been made available. Scholars seeking a fuller understanding of Malcolm X should also seek out the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center, which recently made the Malcolm X Collection available. Furthermore, Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library will soon be the new home to the vast archives compiled by the Malcolm X Project where many more oral histories, government files, and newspaper articles will be accessible. However, the following documents offer a new, rounded look at Malcolm X and his intellectual legacy, buttressing the contributions of current researchers in the field and promoting its future advancement by nascent scholars.