FISHMAN

1935
Poplar
15" H

Inscriptions:
front "Fishman / Here Yo'
Spotts"
back "4–4–35 / L. G. Bolling"

Lent by Steve and Jackie
Coleman

1935 "Fourth Annual Exhibition
of Virginia Artists" (Richmond)

1936 Harmon Foundation
(Portland, Oregon)

Fishman was included in a Harmon Foundation–sponsored collection that traveled to the Portland (Oregon) Museum of Art in May 1936. A photograph of the sculpture accompanied a notice in the *Oregon Journal* of "the long-heralded collection of Negro art." The exhibition was brought to Portland through the efforts of *The Advocate*, Portland's African American newspaper edited by Beatrice Morrow Cannady.[1]

Fishman is one of Bolling's most complex sculptures and demonstrates his ability to capture motion. The figure is in full stride, balancing with the ball of his right foot and with the heel of his left foot touching the ground. The man carries fish in his right hand and slings a woven basket over his shoulder. He turns to shout over his right shoulder. The composition conveys a sense of urgency and motion.

Fishman documents a trade that was vanishing during Bolling's lifetime. Before World War II, vendors hawked their varied wares not only in Richmond's markets but also in the city's residential neighborhoods. The spot, *Leiostomus xanthurus*, a member of the croaker family, is found along the Eastern Seaboard of the United States and is particularly plentiful in the Chesapeake Bay area. A small fish, the spot has a characteristic dark spot above and behind the gill slit. Spots are easily caught in shallow water with live bait.

1. "Exhibit of Negro Art At Museum," *Oregon Journal*, 17 May 1936, clipping in Harmon Foundation Papers, Library of Congress. The sculptor was identified as "Garland Bolling." For information about Beatrice Morrow Cannady, see "Beatrice Morrow Cannady: The Public Advocate," by Hosea H. Harvey, at http://www.law.stanford.edu/library/wlhbp/papers0203/BMCannady.pdf [active 7/31/06].