



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Bob Howard papers**

1927-1986

Sc MG 328

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

## Summary

**Creator:** Howard, Bob, 1906-1986

**Title:** Bob Howard papers

**Date:** 1927-1986

**Size:** 1.04 linear feet (3 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Sylvia Blish and Veora Joyner Smith, November 1989.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** The Bob Howard papers consist of numerous programs for dinner engagements, benefits, and other performances; three scrapbooks of news clippings; and lyrics, musical scores, and arrangements by Howard and his wife, Ruth (Joyner) Howard. Other material includes biographical information, correspondence, contracts and correspondence with his agent, broadsides, handouts and announcements, notices in guidebooks and magazines, feature stories in magazines, and miscellaneous radio, television, and performance material.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Bob Howard papers, Sc MG 328, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Barbara Mathe, February 1990.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Art and Artifacts Division: artwork.

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio and moving image materials. For more information, please contact the division at [schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org](mailto:schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org) or 212-491-2270.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

## Creator History

Bob Howard, pianist, comedian, actor of the Broadway stage and on his own radio show, was the first African American performer to have a regularly scheduled television program. Born in West Newton, Massachusetts, as Howard Joyner, he attended and dropped out of Howard University Medical School and later enrolled in the New England Conservatory of Music. During his early years in vaudeville, he was the piano playing member of Joyner and Hopkins (Morris Hopkins was a dancer).

In 1943, Howard appeared on Broadway in *Early to Bed*. He also worked in radio from 1938 to 1975, with his own programs on WEAJ, WCBS, and WHN. He was the first Black performer on television, with his own 15 minute show on CBS from July 1948 to December 1951. His film credits include *Howard's House Party*, *Junction 88*, and *Stars on Parade*. Howard's career took him to Europe and Japan, and across the United States. He continued playing the piano and singing at various nightclubs and restaurants until his death in 1986.

## Scope and Content Note

The Bob Howard papers consist of numerous programs for dinner engagements, benefits, and other performances; three scrapbooks of news clippings; and lyrics, musical scores, and arrangements by Howard and his wife, Ruth (Joyner) Howard. Other material includes biographical information, correspondence, contracts and correspondence with his agent, broadsides, handouts and announcements, notices in guidebooks and magazines, feature stories in magazines, and miscellaneous radio, television, and performance material.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African American composers  
African American jazz musicians -- New York (State) -- New York  
African American musicians  
African Americans -- Music  
African Americans in radio broadcasting  
African Americans in television broadcasting  
African Americans in the performing arts  
Afro-American pianists  
Piano music  
Vaudeville -- United States

### Names

Howard, Bob, 1906-1986  
Joyner, Ruth A.

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 2 Contracts and files from Howard's agent
- b. 1 f. 3 Financial records
- Music
- b. 1 f. 4 Lyrics (handwritten and typescript)
- b. 1 f. 5 Songs with words and music by Bob and Ruth (Joyner) Howard
- b. 1 f. 6 Musical arrangements
- Performances
- b. 1 f. 7 Miscellaneous
- b. 1 f. 8 Programs
- b. 1 f. 9-10 Programs for dinner engagements and benefits
- b. 1 f. 11 Broad sides, handouts, and announcements
- b. 2 f. 1 Ads in guidebooks and magazines
- b. 2 f. 2 Miscellaneous radio, TV, and other performance material
- b. 2 f. 3-4 Printed matter (clippings and magazine article)
- Awards and honors
- b. 3 Proclamation 1982  
From Westchester County Board of Legislators declaring June 20, 1982, Bob Howard's 85th (?) Birthday, as "Bob Howard's Day" in Westchester County, New York.
- b. 3 1944 Achievement Award 1944  
From the United Nations All Star Youth Committee to Bob Howard for his performance in *Early to Bed*.
- b. 3 Scrapbooks 1939-1951  
Includes three scrapbooks with newspaper clippings, reviews, and letters to editors. One book marked "Bob Howard"; white scrapbook dated May 25-July 10, 1943; and black scrapbook dated 1939-1951.