



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

Guide to the

Negro Actors Guild of America records

1904-1982 [bulk 1937-1982]

Sc MG 259

This inventory was prepared as part of an archival preservation project to arrange, describe and catalog resources essential for the study of the African American theater history. The necessary staff and supplies for the Blacks on Stage: African American Theater Arts Collection Project were made available through a combination of funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the City of New York. Processed by Janice Quinter with the assistance of Octavia Inman. September 1999

Summary

Creator: Negro Actors Guild of America

Title: Negro Actors Guild of America records

Date: 1904-1982 [bulk 1937-1982]

Size: 18.83 linear feet (40 boxes)

Source: Gift of Charles L. Coles and Ernestine Allen, July 1986.

Abstract: The Negro Actors Guild (NAG) was formed in 1936 and began operation in 1937 in New York City as a welfare and benevolent organization for Black performers. The Negro Actors Guild (NAG) records document the functions and activities of this professional organization.

Conditions Governing Use: Welfare Fund records (box 24) and Welfare Committee (box 26) are closed until 2086. Researchers using executive board minutes must agree in writing not to publish names or other information identifying individual welfare fund applicants or recipients.

Preferred citation: [Item], Negro Actors Guild of America records, Sc MG 259, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

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Separated Materials:

The following items were transferred to:

Schomburg Art and Artifacts Division:

One plaster of Paris cast of Leigh Whipper

Schomburg Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division:

27 audiotapes.

Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:

Tphotographs.

Related Materials:

Additional manuscript material relating to the careers of Kenn and Bee Freeman can be found in the Kenn and Bee Freeman Papers in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center.

Creator History

The Negro Actors Guild (NAG) was formed in 1936 and began operation in 1937 in New York City as a welfare and benevolent organization for Black performers. It was established with the assistance of the Theatre Authority (The Theatre Authority is a non-profit organization administering and regulating the free appearances of performers for its member organizations; performances are presented to benefit a variety of health and other groups. The Theatre Authority receives a small percentage of box office receipts from benefits, and some of the monies are returned to the member guilds to be used by their welfare programs), which encouraged black performers to form the Guild in order to become eligible for funds it dispersed. Among the founding members of NAG were Fredi Washington, W. C. Handy, Paul Robeson and Ethel Waters. Bill "Bojangles" Robinson was named honorary president. Noble Sissle was the first elected president, 1937-1957; followed by Leigh Whipper, 1957-1960; Frederick O'Neal, 1960-1964; Charles "Honi" Coles, 1964-ca. 1980; and James Randolph, 1980-1981. The last current available membership list of the Guild (1983) lists 878 members, a staff of one, and Harold Leonard as executive secretary.

The Guild was composed of six committees: finance, administrative, membership, entertainment, sick, and welfare. An executive board provided oversight for the activities of the committees. The finance committee's duties were to oversee all office procedures; the membership committee sponsored drives, and promoted goodwill among the members and was responsible for raising funds (yearly membership dues were only \$5); and the entertainment committee organized and sponsored a wide variety of benefits and programs whose proceeds were used primarily to assist needy entertainers. Benefit performances included midnight shows, luncheons, moonlight boat rides, and a Gala Night of Super Stars - Tribute to Cab Calloway which was a prelude to the proposed annual Black International Arts Festival. A principal source of income was the revenue generated from advertisements published in the annual journals. NAG also sponsored annual memorial services to honor deceased members. Two other core committees were the sick committee which oversaw visitations of the sick in homes and hospitals, and the distribution of food baskets, and gifts at Christmas time; and the welfare committee which carried out the primary aim and purpose of the Guild: to give financial aid to entertainers. The

welfare fund spent thousands of dollars annually on entertainers (a recipient of NAG financial support did not have to be a member or black, although the vast majority were).

Typical services included payment toward the cost of burials, rent, food, and utility bills, in addition to providing assistance with medical bills, and providing carfare and warm coats, and sending flowers.

NAG also published a quarterly journal, "The Negro Actor" from 1938-1940, which was superseded by a monthly newsletter. A significant function was performed by the actor Kenn Freeman, who served as the Guild's historian. He responded to inquiries from the public regarding the history of black entertainment and compiled an archive on the subject consisting of scripts, programs and playbills, and newsclippings and magazine articles, in addition to photographs, cassette and phonograph recordings, musical scores, orchestrations and other documents.

NAG's operating funds came from donations, stipends from the Theatre Authority, membership dues, and proceeds from the various functions the Guild sponsored (e.g., benefit performances, sales of souvenir journals), however funds were limited until the 1970s when NAG received monies bequeathed to it by the Carl and Fania Van Vechten estates. According to one source, the Guild received two sums of monies from the Van Vechten estates. A portion of it became available in 1976, the 40th anniversary year of the Guild; it is not clear when the second portion of the money was received. Members were told about the gift at a membership meeting, where the Secretary, composer Valdo Freeman, informed them that the Guild would receive approximately \$75,000 from the Van Vechten estate and that more funds would be forthcoming at a later date. With this infusion of money in late 1976, the treasury held approximately \$107,000 in its combined welfare, entertainment and general accounts, the largest sum in its history. Nonetheless, within a few years the organization would become embroiled in factional infighting and legal battles which would lead to its dissolution in 1982.

Contention from within had occurred at various times in the history of the Guild resulting in three administrative secretaries leaving the Guild under controversial circumstances.

In 1949 Mabel Roane Subblett, wife of Bubbles Subblett of the famous Buck and Bubbles singing-dancing-comedy team, was indicted and found guilty of grand larceny and forgery involving thousands of dollars of NAG funds; Aileen Avery became involved in friction with Kenn Freeman and apparently hired a lawyer to protect herself from the Guild. The last incident involved Ernestine Allen, who was accused of mishandling large sums of Guild funds. It was the charges against Ms. Allen that led to the factional infighting and resulting court case instituted by one of the factions, which eventually led to the demise of the Guild.

Scope and Content Note

The Negro Actors Guild Records document the functions and activities of this professional organization. The collection encompasses the constitution and by-laws, reports of meetings and minutes of the executive board; general office files reflecting the significant issues in the early operation of NAG; membership records; and financial records including receipt books for paid membership dues, cancelled checks indicating purpose of welfare fund expenditures in addition to audits, statements and monthly reports. Entertainment committee records include programs, flyers and planning documents for the numerous benefits and programs sponsored by this committee; welfare fund records include reports and printed matter. Of special interest are the historical collections including typescripts, performers' historical file, programs and playbills and newsclippings pertaining to various aspects of the performing arts.

Arrangement: Collection organized into six series: I Administrative; II Membership; III Financial; IV Committees; V Printed Material; and VI Historical Collections

Key Terms

Subjects

African American actors
African American actresses
African American dramatists
African American entertainers
African American theater
African American women dramatists
African American women entertainers
African Americans -- Music
African Americans -- New York (State) -- New York -- Charities
African Americans in the performing arts
American drama -- African American authors

Names

Anderson, Marian, 1897-1993
Brewster, Townsend, 1924-
Childress, Alice
Ellington, Duke, 1899-1974
Freeman, Kenn, 1917-
Handy, W. C. (William Christopher), 1873-1958
Jessye, Eva, 1895-1992
Razaf, Andy, 1895-1973
Robinson, Bill, 1878-1949
Wallace, Emmett Babe, 1909-2006
Waters, Ethel, 1896-1977
Whipper, Leigh R. (Leigh Rollin), 1877-1975
Negro Actors Guild of America

Container List

Administrative Records

Executive Board 1936-1981 (2.4 linear feet)

Includes incorporation papers, the constitution and by-laws, documents pertaining to the dissolution of NAG, lists of the executive board members with their duties, original notes taken during meetings (1974-1979), and correspondence of the nominating committee giving notice for selection of officers for the executive board. A significant component of this series are the minutes of the executive board meetings (1936-1980) which also encompass committee meetings for the finance, welfare, sick, administrative, and entertainment committees. There are also audiotapes of minutes of executive board meetings, 1975-1981 (see Separation Record for details). Information regarding the financial troubles undergone by NAG may be gleaned by perusing these files.

This subseries is arranged by type of material, then chronologically.

- b. 1 f. 1 Certificate of Incorporation 1936
- b. 1 f. 2 Constitution and By-laws 1957-1975
- b. 1 f. 3 Constitution and By-laws Revised 1957, circa 1977
- b. 1 f. 4 Dissolution of Negro Actors Guild - Legal Action 1978-1981
- b. 1 f. 5 Constitution Committee
- b. 1 f. 6 Agenda 1980-1981
- Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 7 1947-1951
- b. 1 f. 8 1975-1981
- b. 1 f. 9 List of Members 1961-1980
- b. 1 f. 10 Addresses
- Meeting - Original Notes
- b. 1 f. 11 1974-1975
- b. 1 f. 12 1975
- b. 1 f. 13-14 1976
- b. 2 f. 1 1977
- b. 2 f. 2 1978-1979
- Nominating Committee
- b. 2 f. 3 1954
- b. 2 f. 4 1970-1975
- b. 2 f. 5 1976
- b. 2 f. 6 1977-1981
- b. 2 f. 7 1980-1981
- b. 2 f. 8 Nomination of Interim Members 1979
- b. 2 f. 9 Nominating Committee - Advisory Board 1980
- b. 2 f. 10 Administrative Secretary - Allen, Ernestine (Annisteen) Reports 1975-1978
- b. 2 f. 11 Advisory Board 1979-1980
- Minutes of Meetings
- b. 3 f. 1 1936-1937
- b. 3 f. 2 1938

Administrative Records (cont.)
Executive Board (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 3 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1938
- b. 3 f. 4 Minutes of Meetings 1939
- b. 3 f. 5 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1939
- b. 3 f. 6 Minutes of Meetings 1940
- b. 3 f. 7 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1940
- b. 3 f. 8 Minutes of Meetings 1941
- b. 3 f. 9 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1941
- b. 3 f. 10 Minutes of Meetings 1942
- b. 3 f. 11 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1942
- b. 3 f. 12 Minutes of Meetings 1943
- b. 3 f. 13 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1943
- b. 3 f. 14 Minutes of Meetings 1944
- b. 3 f. 15 Committee Meeting - Minutes 1944
Minutes of Meetings
- b. 3 f. 16 1945
- b. 3 f. 17 1946
- b. 3 f. 18 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1946
- b. 3 f. 19 Minutes of Meetings 1947
- b. 3 f. 20 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1947
- b. 3 f. 21 Minutes of Meetings 1948
Committee Meetings - Minutes
- b. 3 f. 22 1948
- b. 3 f. 23 1949
- b. 3 f. 24 Minutes of Meetings 1949
- b. 3 f. 25 Minutes of Meetings - Joint Sick and Welfare Committee 1949
- b. 4 f. 1 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1949
Minutes of Meetings
- b. 4 f. 2 1950
- b. 4 f. 3 1951
- b. 4 f. 4-5 1952
- b. 4 f. 6 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1952
- b. 4 f. 7 Minutes of Meetings 1953
- b. 4 f. 8 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1953
Minutes of Meetings
- b. 4 f. 9 1954
- b. 4 f. 10 1955
- b. 4 f. 11 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1955
- b. 4 f. 12 Minutes of Meetings 1956
- b. 4 f. 13 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1956
- b. 4 f. 14 Minutes of Meetings 1957
- b. 5 f. 1 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1957

Administrative Records (cont.)
Executive Board (cont.)

Minutes of Meetings

- b. 5 f. 2 1958
- b. 5 f. 3 1959
- b. 5 f. 4 1960
- b. 5 f. 5 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1960
- b. 5 f. 6 Minutes of Meetings 1961
- b. 5 f. 7 Executive Committee - Minutes of Meetings 1961
- b. 5 f. 8 Minutes of Meetings 1962
- b. 5 f. 9 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1962
- b. 5 f. 10 Minutes of Meetings 1963
- b. 5 f. 11 Committee Meetings - Minutes 1963

Minutes of Meetings

- b. 5 f. 12 1964
- b. 5 f. 13 1965
- b. 5 f. 14 1967
- b. 5 f. 15 1969

Minutes of Meetings

- b. 6 f. 1 1973
- b. 6 f. 2 1974
- b. 6 f. 3 1975
- b. 6 f. 4 1976
- b. 6 f. 5 1977
- b. 6 f. 6 1978
- b. 6 f. 7 1979
- b. 6 f. 8 1980

Administrative - General Office Files 1938-1981 (2.5 linear feet)

Includes a body of correspondence files and financial records pertaining to the Theatre Authority and its relationship as the parent organization of NAG, typed drafts of the monthly newsletter (1968-1978), and legal papers dealing with the estates of Carl and Fania Van Vechten, as well as a visitors register (1977, 1980). Correspondence files are primarily those of the administrative secretaries and deal with the death and burial of members, membership dues, attendance at NAG sponsored benefits, financial contributions made to the Guild, fund raising campaigns, and publications of commemorative journals, among other issues. Correspondence in the late 1970s reflects the factional divisions of NAG and the positions administrators took to strengthen their causes. This subseries also includes the correspondence of NAG historian Kenn Freeman about various research topics, as well as inquiries from the public.

This subseries is arranged alphabetically, and then chronologically.

- b. 7 f. 1 Administrative Secretary - Avery, Aileen 1974-1981
- b. 7 f. 2 Black Theater - Instruction Sheets
- b. 7 f. 3 Contributions 1976-1978
- Correspondence
- b. 7 f. 4 1939-1949
- b. 7 f. 5 1950-1958

Administrative Records (cont.)
 Administrative - General Office Files (cont.)
 Correspondence (cont.)

| | |
|---------------|--|
| b. 7 f. 6 | 1960-1963 |
| b. 7 f. 7 | 1964-1969 |
| b. 7 f. 8 | 1970 |
| b. 7 f. 9 | 1971 |
| b. 7 f. 10 | 1972-1973 |
| b. 7 f. 11 | 1974 |
| b. 7 f. 12 | 1975 |
| b. 7 f. 13-14 | 1976 |
| b. 8 f. 1-3 | 1977 |
| b. 8 f. 4 | 1978 |
| b. 8 f. 5 | 1979 |
| b. 8 f. 6 | Incoming Mail Log 1979 |
| b. 8 f. 7-9 | Incoming Mail Log 1980 |
| b. 8 f. 11 | Inquiries 1978-1981 |
| b. 8 f. 12 | 1981 |
| b. 8 f. 13 | Donations 1981 |
| b. 8 f. 14 | Noted Persons (Pearl Bailey, Eubie Blake, Langston Hughes) 1965-1973 |
| b. 8 f. 15 | Crime Insurance 1980-1981 |
| b. 8 f. 16 | Death Notices |
| b. 8 f. 17 | Department of Labor - Unemployment Insurance 1980 |
| b. 8 f. 18 | Eviction Notice 1979 |
| b. 8 f. 19 | Forms - Original |
| b. 8 f. 20 | Friends of NAG 1979 |
| b. 9 f. 1 | Fundraising 1981 |
| b. 9 f. 2 | History of NAG |
| b. 9 f. 3 | Leases 1980-1981 |
| b. 9 f. 4 | Legal 1975-1977 |
| | Newsletter Drafts |
| b. 9 f. 5 | 1968 |
| b. 9 f. 6 | 1974 |
| b. 9 f. 7 | 1975 |
| b. 9 f. 8 | 1976 |
| b. 9 f. 9 | 1977 |
| b. 9 f. 10 | 1978 |
| b. 9 f. 11 | undated |
| | Newsletter Mailing List |
| b. 9 f. 12 | 1974-1978 |
| b. 9 f. 13 | 1976-1978 |
| b. 9 f. 14 | News Release 1979 |
| b. 9 f. 15 | Office Address and Telephone List undated |
| b. 9 f. 16 | Office Day Sheets 1978 |

Administrative Records (cont.)

Administrative - General Office Files (cont.)

- b. 9 f. 17 **Scrolls of Appreciation**
- b. 10 f. 1 **Theatre Authority - Certificate of Incorporation and By-laws**
Theatre Authority
 - b. 10 f. 2 1938-1952
 - b. 10 f. 3 1953
 - b. 10 f. 4 1954-1957
 - b. 10 f. 5 1965-1971
 - b. 10 f. 6 1972-1976
 - b. 10 f. 7 **Financial Statements 1973-1974**
 - b. 10 f. 8 1977-1978
 - b. 10 f. 9 1979
 - b. 10 f. 10 1980
 - b. 10 f. 11 1981
 - b. 10 f. 12 **Minutes and Telephone Schedule 1973-1974**
Balance Sheets - Operating Fund
 - b. 10 f. 13 1976-1979
 - b. 10 f. 14 1979-1981
 - b. 11 f. 1 **Van Vechten Estate 1973-1975**
 - b. 11 f. 2 **Visitors Register 1977, 1980**
Coordinating Council of Negro Performers
 - b. 11 f. 3 1951
 - b. 11 f. 4 1952
 - b. 11 f. 5 **Youth Alliance - Minutes of Meetings 1944**
- b. 12 **Office Address and Telephone File**
Stored offsite

Membership 1938-1981 (4.5 linear feet)

Consists of membership cards with name, address and noting amount of dues paid each year; cards for deceased members were separated from living members by NAG administrative staff. Forms completed during two membership drives, one in 1973 and the other in 1979-1981 document the necessity to broaden support, especially during turbulent times. Other records consist of minutes and programs of annual meetings of the full membership, correspondence regarding the payment of annual dues and relating noteworthy news in the members' lives; and membership reports listing members annual renewal dates (1975-1980). A special questionnaire seeking information from members for the purpose of aiding the Guild office in providing assistance during sickness, death and other emergencies. Responses to questions regarding place and date of birth, name given at birth, and name of nearest relative, etc. for hundreds of members shed some personal information on these entertainers (1964-1975).

The arrangement of the membership files follows an alphabetical scheme.

- b. 13 f. 1 **Acceptance 1938**
Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 2 **Activities 1975-1981**
Stored offsite
Annual Meeting 1975-1981
- b. 13 **Correspondence 1975-1981**
Stored offsite

Membership (cont.)
Annual Meeting (cont.)

- b. 13 f. 4 **Minutes** 1962, 1977
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 5 **Programs** 1941-1980
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 6 **Brochures**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 7 **Membership Committee** 1977
 Stored offsite
- Correspondence**
- b. 13 f. 8 **1951-1977**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 9 **1978**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 10 **1979-1981**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 11 **Legal Action** 1978-1979
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 12 **Death Notices** 1949
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 13 **Membership Drive**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 14 **Lists of Members**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 15 **Mailing Labels** circa 1979-1980
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 16-18 **Mailing Labels**
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 19 **New Members** 1979-1981
 Stored offsite
- Special Questionnaires**
- b. 13 f. 20 **A-D** 1964-1975
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 21 **E-J** 1964-1973
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 22 **K-P** 1964-1975
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 23 **R-W** 1964-1974
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 24 **Rejections** 1981
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 25 **Reports** 1975-1980
 Stored offsite
- b. 13 f. 26 **Voting Proxies** 1980
 Stored offsite
- Membership Cards**
- b. 14 **A-D**
 Stored offsite

Membership (cont.)
Membership Cards (cont.)

- b. 15 **D-J**
 Stored offsite
- b. 16 **K-R**
 Stored offsite
- b. 17 **R-Z**
 Stored offsite
- b. 18 **Deceased Members**
 Stored offsite
- b. 19 **Membership Applications 1960-1975**
 Stored offsite
- b. 20 **Membership Application 1980**
 Stored offsite

Financial Records 1938-1982 (2.5 linear feet)

Consists of monthly cash receipts and disbursements for the general account and the welfare fund, receipt books for paid membership dues, Internal Revenue Service tax returns, audits, statements and monthly reports. Specifically for 1975 (during the time period of alleged improprieties that occurred when Ernestine Allen served as administrative secretary), the series includes lists of all expenditures. Of particular note are the unpaid bills submitted to NAG during 1979-1981 when routine business matters were ignored due to internal conflicts. While check stubs for the general account have not been saved by the Schomburg Center for the 1960s-early 1970s when routine bills were paid in a timely fashion, check stubs have been retained for the period 1974-1979 to enable researchers to investigate the possible causes or manifestations of NAG's financial difficulties during that period.

Additional financial records include the check stub book for the promotion account (1970-1977) as well as receipt books for membership dues paid (1970-1980). The unique financial records in this series are the cancelled checks for the welfare fund listing name of recipient, the reason assistance was given and the amount (usually under \$50), covering the period 1966-1978. Petty cash vouchers for the welfare fund (1966-1967) and receipts for assistance given (1980) represent these two periods.

The arrangement of this series is chronological within type of financial record.

All welfare fund records are restricted.

- b. 21 f. 1 **1938-1939**
- b. 21 f. 2 **1953-1957**
- b. 21 f. 3 **General Account and Suggested Finance Plan 1958**
- b. 21 f. 4 **1960-1965**
- b. 21 f. 5 **Statements and Interim Audit Report 1965-1968**
- b. 21 f. 6 **Annual Financial Statements 1969**
- b. 21 f. 7 **Statements and Audit Summary 1969**
 Statements
- b. 21 f. 8 **1970**
- b. 21 f. 9 **1971**
- b. 21 f. 10 **1970-1976**
- b. 21 f. 11 **1977**
- b. 21 f. 12 **Bank Memoranda and Correspondence 1975-1977**
 Audit
- b. 21 f. 13 **1978**

Financial Records (cont.)
Audit (cont.)

- b. 21 f. 14 1978-1979
- Unpaid Bills
- b. 21 f. 15 1979-1980
- b. 21 f. 16 1980
- b. 21 f. 17 1981-1982
- Check Stubs
- b. 21 f. 18 General Account 1974-1976
- b. 22 f. 1 General Account 1977-1979
- b. 22 f. 2 Promotional Account 1976-1977
- Receipt Books
- b. 22 f. 3 Ticket Book 1970-1972
- b. 22 f. 4 Ticket Book 1973-1974
- b. 22 f. 5 Benefits February-August 1977

Membership Dues

- b. 23 February 1970-January 1972
- v. 1 Stored offsite
- b. 23 October 1970-November 1973
- v. 2 Stored offsite
- b. 23 January 1972-July 1974
- v. 3 Stored offsite
- b. 23 July 1974-August 1974
- v. 4 Stored offsite
- b. 23 January 1976-November 1977
- v. 5 Stored offsite
- b. 23 August 1976-September 1978
- v. 6 Stored offsite
- b. 23 October 1979-November 1980
- v. 7 Stored offsite

Committees

Stored offsite

- b. 25 f. 1 General Information
- Subseries Entertainment Committee 1938-1980 (1 linear foot)

Subseries reflects the scope of programs and benefits sponsored by NAG in order to raise funds. The themes and types of programs changed over the years ranging from annual balls, revues, testimonial dinners, moonlight cruises, dances and Christmas parties. The fortieth anniversary (1977) dinner dance was a major event as was the 1980 Gala Night of Super Stars/Tribute to Cab Calloway. The files consist of programs and flyers for these events, souvenir journals, contracts, correspondence pertaining to the planning of the event, tickets and ticket orders. There are also programs for the annual Easter Sunday memorial services; those honored were not necessarily Guild members (1938-1978). The arrangement of this subseries is chronological within type of material.

Programs and Flyers

- b. 25 f. 2 1938-1949
- b. 25 f. 3 1950s
- b. 25 f. 4 1960s
- b. 25 f. 5 1970s

Committees (cont.)

Subseries Entertainment Committee (cont.)

Programs and Flyers (cont.)

- b. 25 f. 6 1980s
- Benefits and Programs
- b. 25 f. 7 Annual Memorial Services 1938-1978
- b. 25 f. 8 Annual Benefits Midnight Show 1961
- b. 25 f. 9 Playboy Luncheons 1972-1979
- b. 25 f. 10 40th Birthday Celebration December 11, 1977
- Annual Moonlight Boat Rides
- b. 25 f. 11 1964-1979
- b. 25 f. 12 1980
- b. 25 f. 13 Contracts 1968-1977
- b. 25 f. 14 Sunday Afternoon Luncheon - Charles Gallery 1974
- b. 25 f. 15 Luncheon - Hawaii Kai February 3, 1980
- b. 25 f. 16 Tribute to Nicholas Brothers April 8, 1980
- b. 25 f. 17 "Gala Night of Super Stars" - Tribute to Cab Calloway - Black International Arts Festival September 28, 1980
- b. 25 f. 18 "A Gala Night of Super Stars" - Ticket Orders September 28, 1980
- b. 25 f. 19 "A Bus Ride of Your Life" October 11, 1980
- b. 25 f. 20 "An Evening with Count Basie" December 1980
- General Information
- b. 25 f. 21 1951-1969
- b. 25 f. 22 1973-1979
- b. 25 f. 23 Ticket Samples 1959-1974

Printed Material 1937-1980

Includes the subseries Newsletters, Newsclippings and Journals, 1939-1982 (.8 lin. ft.) and encompasses The Negro Actor, the official organ of the Negro Actors Guild (1939) which was supplanted in 1940 with monthly newsletters and continued until 1978. The newsletters covered, such topics as lists of new and sick members, financial statements, information about special professional performances of members, as well as benefits and programs sponsored by NAG. There are two different issues for December 1975, a result of the factional infighting that occurred within the Guild. Newsclippings (1937-1982) in the New York press concern NAG events such as the fundraising activities it sponsored, in addition to the thefts, infighting, financial turmoil, and finally the dissolution of the Guild. The subseries also includes souvenir programs and journals that commemorate certain anniversaries. The subseries Certificates, Broad-sides and Plaques encompasses certificates such as the certificate of incorporation, mayor's proclamation, and some certificates issued members, living and deceased. Posters advertise major events, and bronze plaques were either issued by or to the Negro Actors Guild.

The arrangement of this series is chronological within type of published material.

Newsletters

- b. 27 f. 1 1939-1941
- b. 27 f. 2 1942-1943
- b. 27 f. 3 1944-1945
- b. 27 f. 4 1946-1949
- b. 27 f. 5 1950-1955
- b. 27 f. 6 1956-1959
- b. 27 f. 7 1960-1963

Printed Material (cont.)
Newsletters (cont.)

- b. 27 f. 8 1964-1969
- b. 27 f. 9 1970-1973
- b. 27 f. 10 1974-1978

Newsclippings

- b. 28 f. 1 1937-1940s
- b. 28 f. 2 Theft of Funds - Mabel Roane, Executive Secretary 1949
- b. 28 f. 3 1950s-1960s
- b. 28 f. 4 1970s
- b. 28 f. 5 1980-1982

Souvenir Journal

- b. 28 f. 6 1938
- b. 28 f. 7 1961-1962
- b. 28 f. 8 1964-1977
- b. 28 f. 9 Sheet Music - "The N.A.G. March and Theme Song" - Lyrics by Andy Razaf, Music by Charles L. Cooke 1953
- b. 28 f. 10 Membership Information
 - b. 29 Certificates, Broadsides and Plaques

Historical Collections (4.2 linear feet)

Series was gathered by NAG historian Kenn Freeman in the 1970s as a resource for information about black entertainment in the fields of acting, music, dance, theater, film and television, principally in the United States, but in England as well.

Typescripts 1937-1973 (many undated) (1.2 linear feet)

Contains scripts for plays, scenes, skits, and poetry, either intended for the stage or film. Some of the authors are Hughes Allison, Townsend Brewster, Alice Childress, Eddie Curtis (includes original music and lyrics), Ruby Davis (one poem), Kenn Freeman, Mercedes Gilbert, Lonnie Hicks, Eddie Hunter and Leigh Whipper. There are also some unidentified writers as well as unidentified fragments. Since most of the typescripts are for plays, only a different form of genre is indicated on the container list.

The typescripts are arranged alphabetically by author.

Anonymous

- b. 30 f. 1 "Maid Made"
- b. 30 f. 2 "The Number Players"
- b. 30 f. 3 "The S.S. Joyland"
- b. 30 f. 4 "Wants to Get Married"
- b. 30 f. 5 Poetry
- b. 30 f. 6 Allison, Hughes - "Panyared"
- b. 30 f. 7 Bartee, Richard - "Christmas is for Children" - Poem
- Brewster, Townsend
 - b. 30 f. 8 "The Botany Lesson" - Translated from the Portuguese of Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis
 - b. 30 f. 9 "The Brown Overcoat" - Translated from the French of Victor Sejour
- b. 30 f. 10 "Please Don't Cry and Say No"
- b. 30 f. 11 Childress, Alice - "The Wedding Band"
- b. 30 f. 12 Couttie, Earle - "Because I Am Black"
- b. 30 f. 13 Curtis, Eddie - "This is the Day"

Historical Collections (cont.)
Typescripts (cont.)

- b. 30 f. 14 Davis, Ruby - "The Forte" - Poem 1973
Freeman, Kenn
- b. 31 f. 1 "Blessed are the Fruits" - A Dramatic Treatment of the George Buchner
Novel, "Wozzeck" 1962
- b. 31 f. 2 "'Tis Cricket: An Intimate Revue" - Lyric Script
- b. 31 f. 3 Gilbert, Mercedes - "In Greener Fields" October 17, 1943
- b. 31 f. 4 Gray, Alfred R., Jr. - "The Precedent"
- b. 31 f. 5 Greene, Arline - "My Name is Man" - Poem 1961
- b. 31 f. 6 Gregory, Yvonne - "Christmas Lullaby for a New Born" - Poem
Hicks, Lonnie
- b. 31 f. 7 "Steal-Away: A Southland Story Dealing with the Origin of Negro
Spirituals" 1937
- b. 31 f. 8 "The Teachings of Elduh Tit-Bak: His Sermons on.." 1937
- b. 31 f. 9 Hills, Leslie Pickney - Untitled Poem
Hunter, Eddie
- b. 31 f. 10 "Alimony" 1949
- b. 31 f. 11 with Earl Sweeting - "Domestic Frivolity"
- b. 31 f. 12 with Tim Brymn and Chris Smith - "Four-Eleven-Forty-Four"
- b. 31 f. 13 with Bud Harris and Earl Sweeting - "Here 'Tis" 1943
- b. 31 f. 14 "She's in Bad Shape" - Poem 1949
- b. 32 f. 1 Marshall, Huey - "Soul Sacrifice"
- b. 32 f. 2 McQueen, Butterfly - "Students or Victims" - Essay
- b. 32 f. 3 Maugham, W. Somerset - "The Perfect Gentleman" 1955
New Lafayette Players
- b. 32 f. 4 "In Abraham's Bosom"
- b. 32 f. 5 "Pyramus and Thisbe" - as Arranged from Shakespeare's 'Midsummer's
Night's Dream'
- b. 32 f. 6 "Old Man Pete"
- b. 32 f. 7 Peterkin, Julia - "Boy Chillun"
- b. 32 f. 8 "Release"
- b. 32 f. 9 Phillips - "The Hour Glass" - Scenes 1966
- b. 32 f. 10 Reilly, J. Terrence - "Black" 1972
- b. 32 f. 11 Richardson, Willis - "Near Calvary"
- b. 32 f. 12 Shakespeare, William - "Twelfth Night" - Fredi Washington's Prompt Book -
Annotated June 3, 1938
- b. 32 f. 13 Stuart, Nuba-Harold - "Hunter" 1974
Whipper, Leigh
- b. 32 f. 14 "Too Late the Accolades"
[Original and five copies].
- b. 32 f. 15 "*On the Life of Frederick Douglass*" - from *Life and Times of Frederick
Douglass*
- b. 32 f. 16 Williams, William Carlos - "Many Loves" 1942
- b. 32 f. 17-23 Unidentified Fragments

Historical Collections (cont.)

Performer's Historical File 1920s-1979 (1 linear foot)

Of interest is the Performer's Historical File, which encompasses programs, letters, telegrams, contracts, articles, newspaper clippings, announcements, music, news releases, souvenir journals (some published by NAG), and photocopies of photographic scrapbooks (originals housed in Photographs and Prints Division). The extensive file for Kenn Freeman includes newspaper clippings, programs and related material about his performances in Anna Lucasta in New York and in London, his involvement as a dancer in Calypso Carnival as well as costume designs, many with an African based theme, for unidentified performances. Other performers represented in this subseries include Marian Anderson, Anita Bush, Minto Cato, Duke Ellington, Ida Forsythe, Bee Freeman, W. C. Handy, Sammy Hayward, Eva Jessye, Nettie Perry, Andy Razaf, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Ernest "Baby" Seals, Emmett "Babe" Wallace, Ethel Waters and Leigh Whipper.

This file follows an alphabetical arrangement

- b. 33 f. 1 Anderson, Marian 1938-1939
- b. 33 f. 2 Baker, Josephine undated
- b. 33 f. 3 Blake, Eubie undated
- b. 33 f. 4 Bush, Anita 1916
- b. 33 f. 5 Cato, Minto 1936-1979
- b. 33 f. 6 Coleman, Ralf M 1975
- b. 33 f. 7 Davis, Evelyn 1950-1971
- b. 33 f. 8 Dunham, Katherine undated
- b. 33 f. 9 Ellington, Duke 1938-1974
- b. 33 f. 10-13 Forsythe, Ida 1950s
- b. 33 f. 14 Freeman, Bee 1922-1975
- b. 33 f. 15-17 Freeman, Kenn 1936-1979
- Freeman, Kenn
- b. 34 f. 1-2 "Anna Lucasta" 1947-1954, 1947-1977
- b. 34 f. 3-5 "Calypso Carnival" 1950s
- b. 34 f. 6 Costume Designs undated
- b. 34 f. 7 Gaillard, Anne 1936-1945
- b. 34 f. 8 Gilbert, Mercedes 1946
- b. 34 f. 9 Girvin, Virginia 1966-1975
- b. 34 f. 10 Hall, Adelaide undated
- b. 34 f. 11 Handy, W.C undated
- b. 34 f. 12 Hayward, Sammy 1975-1977
- b. 34 f. 13 Hunter, Eddie 1923-1980
- b. 34 f. 14 Ira Aldridge Society undated
- b. 34 f. 15 Jessye, Eva 1972-1979
- b. 34 f. 16 Justa, Helen undated
- b. 34 f. 17 Mills, Florence undated
- b. 34 f. 18 Mitchell, Abbie undated
- b. 34 f. 19 McLawler, Sarah 1976
- b. 34 f. 20 McNeil, Claudia undated
- b. 34 f. 21 O'Neal, Frederick undated
- b. 34 f. 22 Perry, Nettie 1920s, 1930s, 1950s
- b. 34 f. 23 Peters, Brock 1959

Historical Collections (cont.)
Performer's Historical File (cont.)

- b. 34 f. 24 Razaf, Andy 1954-1961
- b. 34 f. 25 Robeson, Paul 1954-1976
- b. 35 f. 1-3 Robinson, "Bojangles" Bill 1940-1950
 - b. 35 f. 4 Seals, "Baby" Ernest undated
 - b. 35 f. 5 Scott, Eloise B 1943-1969
 - b. 35 f. 6 Tucker, Lorenzo undated
- b. 35 f. 7-8 Vigal, Allen - Scrapbook undated
 - b. 35 f. 9 Wallace, "Babe" Emmett 1953
- b. 35 f. 10 Waters, Ethel 1937-1977
- b. 35 f. 11 Whipper, Leigh undated

Other Entertainers

- b. 35 f. 12 Biographical Information 1923-1932
- b. 35 f. 13 Resumes
- b. 35 f. 14 Autographs
- b. 35 f. 15 Miscellaneous

Programs and Playbills 1905-1981 (.4 linear feet)

Consists of playbills and programs for recitals, musicals, dance performances, plays, and art exhibitions, primarily held in New York City, although a few events occurred in London. A list of programs and playbills prepared by Kenn Freeman serves as a guide to this subseries.

This subseries is arranged chronologically

- b. 36 f. 1 Lists of Performers' Historical Files and Programs and Playbills
- b. 36 f. 2 1900-1919
- b. 36 f. 3 1920
- b. 36 f. 4 1930
- b. 36 f. 5-6 1940
- b. 36 f. 7-8 1950
- b. 36 f. 9-11 1960
 - b. 36 f. 12 1970
- b. 37 f. 1-5 1970
 - b. 37 f. 6 1980
- b. 37 f. 7-9 undated

Entertainment circa 1945-1970s (1.8 linear feet)

Consists of newsclippings and magazine articles pertaining to all phases of blacks in the performing arts industry. Categories include comedians, dance, movies, music, radio, sports, television, theater and visual arts. Dance is subdivided into various forms such as African, ballet, cakewalk and tap; the large category of music is divided into numerous genres such as popular, blues, calypso and gospel. When extensive, all the forms of entertainment have been divided into articles, reviews and features. Three New York City cultural organizations are also included in this subseries.

This subseries is arranged alphabetically by genre of type of entertainment.

- b. 38 f. 1 Comedians
- b. 38 f. 2 Dance
 - b. 38 f. 2 African
 - b. 38 f. 3 Ballet
 - b. 38 f. 4 Cakewalk

Historical Collections (cont.)

Entertainment (cont.)

Dance (cont.)

- b. 38 f. 5 Choreographer
- b. 38 f. 6 Feature Articles - Performers
- b. 38 f. 7 General
- b. 38 f. 8 Jazz
- b. 38 f. 9 Tap

Movies

- b. 38 f. 10 General Articles
- b. 38 f. 11 Feature Articles - Performers
- b. 38 f. 12 Reviews

Music

- b. 38 f. 13 General Articles
- b. 38 f. 14 Blues
- b. 38 f. 15 Cabaret
- b. 38 f. 16 Calypso
- b. 38 f. 17 Columns
- b. 38 f. 18 Composer
- b. 38 f. 19 Concert
- b. 38 f. 20 Contracts
- b. 38 f. 21 Feature Articles - Performers
- b. 39 f. 1 Folk
- b. 39 f. 2 Gospel
- b. 39 f. 3 Jazz
- b. 39 f. 4 Miscellaneous
- b. 39 f. 5 Opera
- b. 39 f. 6 Popular
- b. 39 f. 7 Reggae
- b. 39 f. 8 Rhythm and Blues
- b. 39 f. 9 Vaudeville
- b. 39 f. 10 Radio
- b. 39 f. 11 Sports
- b. 39 f. 12 Television

Theater

- b. 39 f. 13 "Anna Lucasta"
- b. 39 f. 14-16 General Articles
- b. 39 f. 17-18 Features
- b. 40 f. 1-2 General Information
- b. 40 f. 3 Minstrel
- b. 40 f. 4 Obituaries
- b. 40 f. 5-7 Reviews
- b. 40 f. 8 Visual Arts
- b. 40 f. 9 General Information

Historical Collections (cont.)

Entertainment (cont.)

- b. 40 f. 10 Columns
- b. 40 f. 11 The Cotton Club
- b. 40 f. 12 Harlem Cultural Council
- b. 40 f. 13 West Indian American Entertainers