



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

Guide to the

**Union Settlement Cultural Center records**

1904-1977 [bulk 1958-1977]

Sc MG 181

## Summary

**Creator:** Union Settlement Cultural Center (New York, N.Y.)

**Title:** Union Settlement Cultural Center records

**Date:** 1904-1977 [bulk 1958-1977]

**Size:** 5.0 linear feet (5 boxes)

**Source:** Gift of Thelma Hall, former director of the Union Settlement Cultural Center, June 1977.  
06/29/77

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

**Abstract:** A division of Union Settlement, an East Harlem settlement house, the Cultural Center, founded in 1917, incorporated music, art, drama, and literary activities into programs. Records primarily document the Center's administration and activities under the leadership of H. Blake Hobbs.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Union Settlement Cultural Center records, Sc MG 181, 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 in 1977 by unknown individual. Surveyed by Janice Quinter, 1987.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the General Research and Reference Division: books, magazines, and newsletters.

Transferred to the Photographs and Print Division: photographs.

## Creator History

A division of Union Settlement, an East Harlem settlement house, the Cultural Center, founded in 1917, incorporated music, art, drama, and literary activities into programs. H. Blake Hobbs (1911-1973) was

the director from 1958 until his death.

In 1895, the Union Settlement Association was founded by alumni, faculty, and students of Union Theological Seminary at 202 East 96th Street, in response to the desperate conditions of immigrants struggling to make a new life in America. Within five months, the agency moves to its present site at 237 East 104th Street. One of the largest settlement houses in New York, Union Settlement currently serves more than 10,000 East Harlem residents of all ages each year through its education, health, senior services, youth development, childcare, counseling, and economic development programs.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The records of the Union Settlement Cultural Center primarily document the Center's administration and activities under the leadership of H. Blake Hobbs. There are also documents relating to Union Settlement's other programs, and material about and by Hobbs. Included are annual reports, administrative records, activities' files, correspondence, diaries, poetry, drawings, financial ledgers, flyers, newspaper and magazine clippings, and printed material.

**Arrangement:** Records organized into three series: I. Union Settlements; II. Cultural Center; and III. Hobbs, H. Blake.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African Americans -- New York (State) -- New York -- Charities  
African Americans -- Social life and customs  
African Americans -- Societies, etc  
Associations, institutions, etc -- African American membership  
Associations, institutions, etc -- New York (State) -- New York  
Children--Services for  
Community organization  
Youth -- New York (State) -- New York -- Harlem

### **Names**

Hobbs, H. Blake, 1911-1973  
Union Settlement Association (New York, N.Y.)  
Union Settlement Cultural Center (New York, N.Y.)

## Container List

### Union Settlement 1904-1975

This series provides an overview of the settlement house since its founding in 1895. There is limited information about the organization's other programs.

- b. 1 **Reports, journals, and brochures 1904-1975**
- b. 1 **Newsletters, fact sheets, and invitations 1966-1975**
- b. 1 **Activities 1969-1974**  
Includes material about the credit union, day care, senior citizens, Head Start program, and Pasquale Cacace (staff member).
- Alumni 1954-1968**  
Includes newspaper clippings and memos.
- b. 1 **Lancaster, Burt**
- b. 1 **Davis, Ossie**
- b. 1 **News clippings 1915-1975**
- b. 1 **Other printed matter 1969-1973**  
Includes material on the National Federation of Settlement and Neighborhood Centers.

### Cultural Center 1945-1977

This series is divided into administrative and activities files. The administrative material includes a record book listing the Center's art inventory and two financial ledgers. Additionally, address books include miscellaneous data about the Center's activities. The activities file is divided into four categories based on the functions of the Cultural Center: music, art, literary, and library. The Center was known as the Music School until the 1960s, when Hobbs expanded the program to include other activities. The art category is divided into files of specific artists. Documents in these files include original artwork and reprints, flyers, articles, and letters. The literary file includes information on activities of which the Cultural Center was a continuing or initial sponsor and participant, such as the East River Players and East Harlem Writing Center. It also includes poems written by East Harlem residents and famous Black authors.

Arranged into two subseries: (1) Administrative and (2) Activities.

#### Administrative

- b. 2 **Correspondence and memoranda 1958-1976**
- b. 2 **Annual reports 1945-1977**  
Includes reports and flyers for specific activities.

#### Financial

- b. 2 **Budgets and grant requests 1962-1977**
- b. 2 **Inventory, insurance, bills, and sales 1965-1976**  
Includes book of sales vouchers.

- b. 2 **Personnel 1958-1975**

#### Ledgers and notebooks 1968-1976

- b. 2 **Art inventory record book 1968-1971**
- b. 2 **Address books 1972-1974**  
Includes addresses for activities, artists, organizations, supply companies, and catering companies.
- b. 2 **Accounts payable ledgers 1968-1973**  
Includes two ledgers, one from 1968-1972 and one from 1969-1973.
- b. 2 **Art and artists notebooks 1969-1972**  
Includes information on supplies, artists, and customers.

Cultural Center (cont.)  
Administrative (cont.)  
Ledgers and notebooks (cont.)

- b. 2 East Harlem Summer Festival petty cash legal pad 1976

#### Activities

##### Music

- b. 3 Lessons, sheet music, and classes 1966
- b. 3 Concert flyers 1958-1975
- Clippings 1960-1963

##### Art

- b. 3 Andrews, Benny 1969-1971  
Includes articles.
- b. 3 Guzman, Miguel A 1962-1973  
Includes original drawings, reproductions, flyers, articles, writing, and letters.
- b. 3 Hall, Thelma ca. 1960s-1976  
Includes original drawings and reproductions.
- b. 3 Neel, Alice 1966-1967  
Includes reproductions, flyers, and articles.
- b. 3 Tecla 1967-1972  
Includes reproductions, flyers, articles, and letters.
- b. 4 Other artists and exhibits 1967-1976  
Includes originals, reproductions, flyers, and articles.
- b. 4 Unrelated exhibits 1968-1975  
Includes flyers, advertisements, and articles.

##### Literary

- b. 4 Poetry 1960-1973  
Includes Thelma Hall, Anabel F. McKay, Annie Laurie Chestnut, and others.
- b. 4 Plays 1965-1976  
Includes East River Players.
- b. 4 Films 1974-1976
- b. 4 Printed material
- b. 4 Harlem Writing Center 1968-1970
- b. 4 East River Players 1971

##### Library

- b. 4 Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration
- b. 4 Poetry
- b. 4 African artifacts' labels

#### Hobbs, H. Blake 1938-1973

This series includes personal and professional correspondence, writing, and minutes of the cultural committee of the East Harlem Council for Community Planning, of which Hobbs was the chair. Writing describe Hobbs's life, several trips, and activities in East Harlem. Hobbs was also chairman of the Union Settlement's credit union; this material can be found in the Union Settlement series.

- b. 5 Correspondence and resumes 1954-1973
- b. 5 Writing 1961-1973  
Includes two notebooks.
- b. 5 East Harlem Council for Community Planning 1962-1966
- b. 5 Financial 1961-1973

Hobbs, H. Blake (cont.)

b. 5     Articles about Hobbs 1938-1969