



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

Guide to the

**Lorenzo Tucker papers**

1928-1986 [bulk ca. 1970-ca. 1980]

Sc MG 453

Processed by Janice Quinter, 2006.

## Summary

**Creator:** Tucker, Lorenzo

**Title:** Lorenzo Tucker papers

**Date:** 1928-1986 [bulk ca. 1970-ca. 1980]

**Size:** 3.42 linear feet (4 boxes)

**Source:** Purchase, Pauline Segura Tucker, March 28, 1988.

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

**Abstract:** Lorenzo Tucker was a stage and screen actor. The Lorenzo Tucker papers reflect portions of Tucker's screen and stage career, and also discuss his service during World War II and his varied occupations in the 1960s-1980s.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Lorenzo Tucker papers, Sc MG 453, 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:** Processed by Janice Quinter, 2006.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division: books and periodicals.

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

Born in 1907 in Philadelphia, Lorenzo Tucker was a stage and screen actor, appearing in eleven all-

Black movies (1927-1936) produced by film pioneer Oscar Micheaux. Frequently appearing as the romantic lead, he was billed as the "Black Valentino." Tucker performed in vaudeville and dramatic theater. In addition to acting and directing his own troupe in the 1950s, he was in the stage production of Mae West's *The Constant Sinner*. In the 1970s-1980s, he gained national recognition for his early movie career.

Tucker served in the infantry and as an entertainment specialist during World War II. Later, he worked as a photographer. From 1961 to 1974, Tucker was an assistant to the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, Dr. Milton Helpert. At other times, Tucker's varied career and economic necessity led him to become a broadcaster, house painter, and security guard. Tucker died in 1986 at age 79.

## Scope and Content Note

The Lorenzo Tucker papers reflect portions of Tucker's screen and stage career, and also discuss his service during World War II and his varied occupations in the 1960s-1980s. There is no original material from his early acting career with Oscar Micheaux, but there are several scrapbooks representing his theatrical performances, including the touring production (British Isles) of the American Negro Theatre's *Anna Lucasta* and his role as road manager for an all-Black production of *Harvey* starring Dooley Wilson. Another scrapbook features Tucker's World War II experience as a trainee in MacDill Field, Florida, and an entertainment specialist through programs, clippings, and other printed material.

The collection documents Tucker's efforts to share his knowledge about Black film and theater through correspondence, which references his early acting career. There is a folder of letters from an actor friend, Jay Flash Riley, 1979-1980, and a limited number of letters regarding his work as a photographer, with clients such as *Sepia Magazine*, the Catholic Actors Guild, and the International News and Picture Syndicate. The recognition in the 1970s-1980s for his pioneering work as an actor is documented in awards and appreciations presented to him by such organizations as the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame and L.A.-D.C. Connection, Inc.

The collection includes programs and playbills from films and theatrical presentations in which Tucker acted, served as the master of ceremonies, or was the official photographer. Additionally, there are scripts, several authored by Tucker. Included are scripts for plays in which he performed such as *Harvey* and *Ol' Man Satan*, and a number of radio dramatizations and television programs. The majority of the News clippings series contains articles mentioning Tucker; a number show photographs he took as a member of the International News and Picture Syndicate. Additional clippings discuss other Black actors with whom Tucker worked.

**Arrangement:** Arranged into seven series: I. Personal; II. Correspondence; III. Awards and appreciations; IV. Programs and playbills; V. Scripts; VI. Scrapbooks; and VII. News clippings.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African American actors  
African American dramatists  
African American entertainers  
African American motion picture actors and actresses

African American photographers  
African American theater  
African Americans in the performing arts  
Authors, Black

**Names**

Tucker, Lorenzo

## Container List

### Personal 1951-1985

- b. 1 f. 1 Resumes
- b. 1 f. 2-3 Biographical information
- b. 1 f. 4-6 Marriages 1951-1974
- b. 1 f. 7 Filmography, "A Tentative List of All Black Sound Motion Pictures, 1930-1950" 1985
- b. 1 f. 8 Membership, the Masquers Club 1980-1981

### Correspondence 1942-1986

- b. 1 f. 9-10 Personal 1953-1984
- b. 1 f. 11-14 Acting career 1970-1986
  - b. 1 f. 15 Broadcasting career undated
  - b. 1 f. 16 Mortuary career 1970-1974
- b. 1 f. 17-18 Photography career 1966-1981
  - b. 1 f. 19 March on Washington Movement 1942
  - b. 1 f. 20 Riley, Jay Flash 1979-1980
  - b. 1 f. 21 Obituaries of friends and family
  - b. 1 f. 22 Fan mail 1976-1984
  - b. 1 f. 23 Greeting cards

### Awards and appreciations 1962-1985

#### Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame

- b. 1 f. 24-25 1974
  - b. 1 f. 26 1975
  - b. 1 f. 27 1976
  - b. 1 f. 28 1977
  - b. 1 f. 29 1978-1980
- b. 1 f. 30 Broadcasting
- b. 1 f. 31 Jewish Museum, Black Film Series 1970
- b. 2 f. 1-3 Living Legends of Black Hollywood: Yesterday 1984-1985
- b. 2 f. 4-5 Negro Actors Guild 1962-1982
- b. 2 f. 6-7 *Tony Brown's Journal appearances* 1983-1985
- b. 2 f. 8-9 Various
- b. 2 f. 10 Invitations 1962-1982
- b. 2 f. 11 Mentions and dedications

### Programs and playbills 1931-1979

- b. 2 f. 12 1931-1979
- b. 2 f. 13 1939-1961
- b. 2 f. 14 Lobby cards and programs, Catholic Actors Guild of America 1971-1978

### Scripts 1959-1960

#### By Tucker

- b. 2 f. 15 Radio scripts

Scripts (cont.)

By Tucker (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 16 Television scripts
- b. 2 f. 17 Television scripts
- b. 2 f. 18 Interview, Audelco Black Theatre Award Ceremony, Story Proposal, Talent Parade and Poetry
- b. 2 f. 19 Film scripts
- b. 2 f. 20-22 Play scripts
- b. 2 f. 23-25 Radio and television scripts
  - b. 2 f. 27 Branch, William. "Fifty Steps Toward Freedom: A Dramatic Presentation in Observance of the 50th Anniversary of the NAACP, 1909-1959" 1959
  - b. 2 f. 27 Heywood, Donald. *Ol' Man Satan* 1960

Scrapbooks 1931-1960

- b. 3 f. 1-2 *No. I, Anna Lucasta, Britain, stage production* 1953-1954
- b. 3 f. 3 *No. II, Born Yesterday* 1951
- b. 3 f. 4 *No. III, County Seat* 1958-1959
- b. 3 f. 5 *No. IV, Harvey* 1951-1952
- b. 3 f. 6 *No. V, Porgy and Bess* ca. 1940-1949
- b. 3 f. 7 *No. VI, Springtime for Henry, plan and budget* 1959-1960
- b. 3 f. 8 No. VII, Various plays 1931-1958
- b. 3 f. 9 No. VIII, "America's Black Valentino"
- b. 3 f. 10 No. IX, "Casting, Photos, Resumes" 1959
- b. 4 f. 1 No. X, World War II 1943-1945

News clippings 1928-1986

- b. 4 f. 2-3 1970-1975
- b. 4 f. 4 1977
- b. 4 f. 5 1928-1960
- b. 4 f. 6 1971-1972
- b. 4 f. 7 1968-1985
- b. 4 f. 8 1974-1985
- b. 4 f. 9 1971-1985
- b. 4 f. 10 1963-1976
- b. 4 f. 11 1970-1986
- b. 4 f. 12 1975-1977