



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

Guide to the

**Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison papers**

1920-1989

Sc MG 390

## Summary

**Creator:** Wooding, Sam, 1895-1985

**Title:** Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison papers

**Date:** 1920-1989

**Size:** 2.08 linear feet (5 boxes, 1 tube)

**Source:** Gift of Rae Harrison Wooding, August 2004.

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

**Abstract:** Sam Wooding was a jazz pianist, arranger, composer, and the accompanist-manager for his third wife, singer Rae Harrison. The Sam Wooding papers primarily document certain aspects of his career, with some files pertaining to his partnership with Rae Harrison and her early career.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Scrapbook closed for preservation reasons.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison papers, Sc MG 390, 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 Diana Lachatanere, November 2004.

### Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio 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.

## **Related Materials:**

Transcript of oral history interview with Sam Wooding in Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University.

## **Creator History**

Sam Wooding was a jazz pianist, arranger, and composer who began his career in 1912 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. In the 1920s-1940s, he played residencies with the Society Syncopators and his Southland Spiritual Choir as well as other groups, touring the United States and Europe. In the mid-1930s, Wooding attended the University of Pennsylvania, earning two degrees, including a Master's in Education. He taught during the early 1950s, then in 1953, he became the accompanist-manager for his third wife, singer Rae Harrison; thereafter, the duo toured extensively throughout the world. In 1975, Wooding organized a big band, the Bicentennial Jazz Vista Orchestra. Among many "firsts" in jazz history, Wooding is credited with having the first American band to make recordings in Europe, the first Black band to play a musical abroad in the *Chocolate Kiddies* in Berlin, and the first Black band to tour the Soviet Union and Scandinavia.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Sam Wooding and Rae Harrison papers primarily document certain aspects of Wooding's career, with some files pertaining to his partnership with Rae Harrison and her early career. Included are biographical and personal information, along with correspondence (primarily incoming) regarding their performances. There are also contracts, itineraries, programs, flyers, financial records, certificates, and news clippings. A small amount of information concerns Wooding's recording career and his companies, Pan Jerbel, Inc. and Twin Signs Record Corp. Of particular interest are Wooding's manuscript musical arrangements and compositions.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American composers  
African American entertainers  
African American music teachers  
African American musicians  
African American singers  
African American women entertainers  
African American women jazz singers  
African American women singers  
African Americans in popular culture  
Authors, Black  
Jazz musicians  
Jazz singers -- United States

### **Names**

Harrison, Rae  
Wooding, Sam, 1895-1985

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- b. 1 f. 10 Twin Signs Record Corp 1976-1977
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- b. 1 f. 13 The Sam Wooding Singers ca. 1941-1949
- b. 1 f. 14 Honors, awards, and certificates 1973-1980
- b. 1 f. 15 Programs 1930-1979
- b. 1 f. 16 Blank stationery
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