



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

Guide to the

**Charles "Cookie" Cook collection**

1920s-1995 [bulk 1970s-1990]

Sc MG 99

## Summary

**Creator:** Cook, Charles, 1917-1991

**Title:** Charles "Cookie" Cook collection

**Date:** 1920s-1995 [bulk 1970s-1990]

**Size:** 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Gift of Circuit Productions and Susan Goldbetter, August 2006.

**Abstract:** Charles "Cookie" Cook, a vaudeville tap and acrobatic dancer and teacher for more than fifty years, began performing as a child with Garbage and the Two Cans and Sarah Venable and Her Picks. In 1930, he and Ernest (Brownie) Brown formed the headline dance and comedy team Cook and Brown. Their act, seen in such venues as New York's Cotton Club, combined tumbling, dance, and comedic patter. Cook was one of the members of The Copasetics, the fraternity of black entertainers that was influential in the revival of tap dancing in the late 1970s-1980s. Cook also performed in the film *Cotton Club*, at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and at a 1990 tap festival in New York. He died at age 77 in 1991. The Charles "Cookie" Cook Collection is actually a scrapbook that has been dismantled. The material focuses primarily on Cookie's later years with few primary source documents. There are several letters, telegrams, and postcards expressing appreciation for his performances, but no letters written by Cook. The collection also includes programs for performances in which Cook appeared, especially with the tap dance group The Copasetics in New York City, and other venues in the United States and Rome (1980-1995), as well as flyers advertising for a variety of performances in which Cook was featured (1961-1979). There are also programs for shows where jazz musicians, singers, and other artists appeared, in addition to news clippings discussing Cook, other tap dancers, and entertainers.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Charles "Cookie" Cook collection, Sc MG 99, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

## Creator History

Charles "Cookie" Cook, a vaudeville tap and acrobatic dancer and teacher for more than fifty years, began performing as a child with Garbage and the Two Cans and Sarah Venable and Her Picks. In 1930, he and Ernest (Brownie) Brown formed the headline dance and comedy team Cook and Brown. Their act, seen in such venues as New York's Cotton Club, combined tumbling, dance, and comedic patter. Cook was one of the members of The Copasetics, the fraternity of black entertainers that was influential in the revival of tap dancing in the late 1970s-1980s. Cook also performed in the film *Cotton Club*, at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and at a 1990 tap festival in New York. He died at age 77 in 1991.

## **Scope and Content Note**

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## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American dancers  
African American entertainers  
African Americans in the performing arts  
Tap dancing

### **Names**

Cook, Charles, 1917-1991  
Copasetics

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Letters 1967-1982
- b. 1 f. 2 Programs 1980-1995
- b. 1 f. 3 Flyers 1979
- b. 1 f. 4 Other programs 1955-1990
- b. 1 f. 5 Clippings 1920s-1990