



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

Guide to the

Ron Simmons papers

1972-2006

Sc MG 619

Summary

Creator: Simmons, Ron, 1950-

Title: Ron Simmons papers

Date: 1972-2006

Size: 6.42 linear feet (7 boxes)

Source: Gift of Ron Simmons, 2006.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Ron Simmons, an early Black LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning) rights activist in the 1970s and 1980s. The Ron Simmons papers contain manuscripts for several of his writings, correspondence, research material, and material related to his professional work.

Preferred citation: [Item], Ron Simmons papers, Sc MG 619, 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 Steven G. Fullwood, July 2006.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the General Research and Reference Division: books

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Related Materials:

In the Life Archive (ITLA) miscellaneous collections, Sc MG 736, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Creator History

Ron Simmons, an early Black LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning) rights activist in the 1970s and 1980s, was instrumental in building Us Helping Us, People into Living, Inc., an HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care services organization that specializes in services for Black gay and bisexual men. Simmons participated in a number of pioneering progressive Black LGBTQ organizations including the National Coalition of Black Gays and the DC Coalition of Black Lesbian and Gay Men, and his seminal essay, "Some Thoughts on the Challenges Facing Black Gay Intellectuals", was featured in the groundbreaking anthology, *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men* (1991). He was also a cast member, photographer, and field producer for Marlon Riggs's *Tongues Untied* (1987), the first documentary to specifically deal with Black gay identity.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Simmons's political sensibilities were roused while in college at the State University of New York at Albany (SUNY Albany), where he received his B.A. in Afro-American Studies (1972), M.A. in African History (1978), and M.S. in Educational Communications (1979). In 1972, Simmons served as the editor-in-chief of SUNY Albany's undergraduate yearbook, *Torch*, which, for its time, contained controversial issues and images dealing with homosexuality and the Vietnam War. In 1973, as a graduate student, he penned "Faggotales," arguably the first column written specifically from a Black gay male perspective for the school newspaper. Simmons received his Ph.D. in Mass Communications from Howard University (1987), and served as an assistant professor in mass communication, history and theory, radio and television production, still photography, and Black film and research methods from 1986-1992.

Scope and Content Note

The Ron Simmons papers contain manuscripts for several writings including "Some Thoughts on the Challenges Facing Black Intellectuals", "Faggotales", and other early writings dating to the 1970s; correspondence; a file for Simmons's editorial and layout work for *Blacklight* magazine; a copy of the "Torch" yearbook (1972); and clippings. Other items include a copy of writer Keith Boykin's dissertation "Black Gay Manifesto" (1992); correspondence with colleagues such as filmmaker Marlon Riggs and writers Essex Hemphill, Audre Lorde, and Max Smith; files for early Black gay organizations including National Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians, DC Black Gay Men and Women's Community Conference, Gay Men of African Descent; periodicals such as *BGM*, *BLK*, and *MOJA*; material from the conference Black Nations/Queer Nations (1995); an interview with Sylvester (1992); and files of early mainstream gay publications.

There are also subject files for homosexuality in Africa, Same Gender Loving, and Black LGBTQ artists; and general LGBTQ magazines, newsletters, flyers, and research files dating to the early 1970s.

The collection also contains grant proposals written by Simmons for Us Helping Us (1994-2005), biographical statements, resumes, educational transcripts, and research papers.

Arrangement: Arranged into four series: (1) Personal; (2) Writing; (3) Professional; and (4) ResearchSubject files.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American gays
African Americans -- Diseases
AIDS (Disease) -- United States
AIDS (Disease) -- United States -- Prevention
AIDS activists -- United States -- 20th century
Authors, Black
Gay liberation movement
Gay men
Homosexuality
Lesbians
Sexually transmitted diseases

Names

Hemphill, Essex
Riggs, Marlon T.
Simmons, Ron, 1950-
D.C. Black Gay Men and Women's Community Conference
National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (U.S.)
Us Helping Us, People into Living, Inc.

Container List

Personal papers 1972-2006

Arranged alphabetically.

- b. 1 f. 1-2 About Simmons
- b. 1 f. 3 Alzheimer's research
- b. 1 f. 4 Ascending Community Church 1981-1988
- b. 1 f. 5 Astrology
- b. 1 f. 6 Awards, commissions, and citations 2005-2006
- b. 1 f. 7 Africa admission
- b. 1 f. 8 Biography and vitae
- b. 1 f. 9-11 Correspondence 1980-1995
- b. 1 f. 12 Evaluations and recommendations 1975-1983
- b. 1 f. 13 Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School
- b. 1 f. 14 Lovers
- b. 1 f. 15 Mementos
- b. 1 f. 16 Personal mailing list
- b. 1 f. 17 Resumes and applications
- b. 1 f. 18 SUNY Albany
- b. 1 f. 19 Transcripts 1972
- b. 1 f. 20-21 *Torch yearbook reactions*
- b. 1 f. 22 Trip to Africa

Writing 1975-1992

Arranged into two subseries: (1) Articles and essays; and (2) Editor.

Articles and essays

- b. 1 f. 23 "Afrocentricity and Other Ideas" draft ca. 1982-1983
- b. 1 f. 24 "A Critique of My Paper on Audience Production Functions" 1983
- b. 1 f. 25 "Faggotales"
Column for Albany Student Press.
- b. 1 f. 26 "*From a Whisper to a Scream*", *Gay Community News* 1992
- b. 1 f. 27 "Invisible Students: Acknowledging Sexual Minority Youth"
- b. 1 f. 28 "Is a 'Homo' a 'Homeboy': Gay Images in Black Film", abstract for 4th Annual Sagar Symposium 1992
- b. 1 f. 29 "*Sexuality, Television, and Death: A Black Gay Dialogue on Malcolm X*", with Marlon Riggs, from *Malcolm X: In Our Own Image* 1992
- b. 1 f. 30 "*Some Thoughts on the Challenges Facing Black Gay Intellectuals*", from *Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men* 1991
- b. 1 f. 31 Early writing 1990-1992
- b. 1 f. 32 Music writing
- b. 1 f. 33-37 Assorted articles

Editor

- b. 1 f. 38-39 *Blacklight Magazine* 1979-1985

Writing (cont.)

Editor (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 40 "Community School News" 1975-1976
- b. 1 f. 41 *Hilltop, Howard University newspaper* 1982-1983
- b. 1 f. 42 "New York State Sequicentennial" 1977
- b. 1 f. 43-44 "Unity KNUDGIT" newsletter 1978-1979
- b. 1 f. 45 Lectures
- b. 1 f. 46-47 Poetry

Professional papers 1972-2005

Arranged into 3 subseries: (1) Us Helping Us; (2) Gay liberation work; and (3) Correspondence and individuals.

Us Helping Us

- b. 2 f. 1-3 General
 - Grants
 - b. 2 f. 4 Application in response to HIV Prevention Projects Program for African American Gay and Bisexual Men 1994-1995
 - b. 2 f. 5 Application in response to Title I Ryan White CARE Act 1995
 - b. 2 f. 6 Application in response to HIV Prevention Program for African American Gay and Bisexual Men 1997
 - b. 2 f. 7 1998 Bridge Builders Fund Proposal application in response to FY 1999 Prevention and Support Services 1999
 - b. 2 f. 8-9 CDC grants, Community Based HIV Prevention Projects for Gay Men of Color and African Americans 1999
 - b. 2 f. 10 Social marketing for Black gay/bisexual men 2000
 - b. 2 f. 11 Application for HIV prevention for African American men who have sex with men 2000
 - b. 2 f. 12 Community-based strategies to increase HIV testing of persons at high risk in communities of color, African American sexually active men and women 2000
 - b. 2 f. 13 Transgender Prevention Program, 2000 US Conference of Mayors 2001
 - b. 2 f. 14 Minority HIV/AIDS Mental Health Services 2001
 - b. 2 f. 15 Transgender Prevention Program, 2002 Prevention Services Targeting Black Gay Men 2002
 - b. 3 f. 1 HIV Prevention and Intervention Services Grant 2004
 - b. 3 f. 2-3 Washington AIDS Partnership, FYI 2005 Ryan White Grant, case management and peer/professional support groups 2004
 - b. 3 f. 4 USCM Collaborative HIV Prevention Grant 2004
 - b. 3 f. 5-6 CDC HIV Prevention Interventions, HIV Counseling and Testing for Africans, and HIV Testing for Transgender Persons in Non-Clinical Services 2004
 - b. 3 f. 7 HIV Prevention Intervention and HIV Counseling and Testing for African Americans 2005
 - b. 3 f. 8 *Torch yearbook* 1972
- b. 4 f. 1-3 Miscellaneous
 - b. 4 f. 4 Acts of Art Gallery poster
 - b. 4 f. 5 Aisa Fashion, Inc
 - b. 4 f. 6 Articles of interest

Professional papers (cont.)

Us Helping Us (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 7 Association for Multi-Image
 - b. 4 f. 8 Black writers in Washington, DC
 - b. 4 f. 9 CPB Program Fund proposal 1986
 - b. 4 f. 10 Cuba video project
 - b. 4 f. 11 Egypt slide show
 - b. 4 f. 12 Hazardous materials
 - b. 4 f. 13-14 Institute for the Preservation and Study of African American Writing, Inc
 - b. 4 f. 15 "Lawrence Berkeley" project
 - b. 4 f. 16 "James Lester Hillman – The Man" project 1991
 - b. 4 f. 17-18 Livermore project
 - b. 4 f. 19 Mandala Center
 - b. 4 f. 20 National Alliance of Third World Journalists
 - b. 4 f. 21-29 Photographs
 - b. 4 f. 30 Projects
 - b. 4 f. 31-32 Proposals and grants
 - b. 4 f. 33 Ron Simmons Productions
 - b. 4 f. 34 Tecnica
 - b. 4 f. 35 Xerox
 - b. 4 f. 36 WETA
 - b. 4 f. 37 "We Laugh, We Cry" project
 - b. 4 f. 38 Westover
 - b. 4 f. 39 Worthy, William
 - b. 4 f. 40 Miscellaneous
- Gay liberation work
- b. 5 f. 1 The Associates
 - b. 5 f. 2 *BGM*
 - b. 5 f. 3 *BLK, National Black Lesbian and Gay*
 - b. 5 f. 4 Black gay and lesbian artists
 - b. 5 f. 5 Black gay literary aesthetics
 - b. 5 f. 6 Black gay magazines
 - b. 5 f. 7 Black gay organizations
 - b. 5 f. 8 Black gay religious institutions
 - b. 5 f. 9 Black gay sexuality
 - b. 5 f. 10 Black gay writers
 - b. 5 f. 11 Black LGBT photographs
 - b. 5 f. 12 Black Nations/Queer Nations Conference 1995
 - b. 5 f. 13 The Clubhouse (dance club)
 - b. 5 f. 14 DC Black Gay Men and Women's Community Conference 1983
 - b. 5 f. 15 DC Coalition of Black Lesbian and Gay Men 1990-1992
 - b. 5 f. 16 Gay Africa 1983-1992
 - b. 5 f. 17 Gay Men of African Descent 1989-1994

Professional papers (cont.)

Gay liberation work (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 18 Gay/same gender loving
- b. 5 f. 19 Howard University Gay Student Union
- b. 5 f. 20 *MOJA newspaper* 1978
- b. 5 f. 21-24 National Coalition of Black Gays and Lesbians 1983-1991
- b. 5 f. 25 Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League 1987-1992
- b. 5 f. 26 Station to Station (Black gay group)
- b. 5 f. 27 Sylvester interview 1992
- b. 5 f. 28 *Tongues Untied* documentary
- b. 5 f. 29 Gay Islam 1993
- b. 5 f. 30-32 Gay liberation 1970s-1990s
- b. 5 f. 33 Gay march project
- b. 5 f. 34-38 Gay publications 1971-1993
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 1993

Correspondence and individuals

- b. 6 f. 1 Baldwin, James articles 1980-1991
- b. 6 f. 2 Baraka, Amiri articles undated
- b. 6 f. 3 Benjamin, Martin photos
- b. 6 f. 4 Bogus, SDiane photograph
Boykin, Keith 1992
Includes dissertation proposal and correspondence.
- b. 6 f. 6 Brinkley, Sidney
- b. 6 f. 7 Cheeks, Rainey article
- b. 6 f. 8-9 Chomsky, Noam articles 1991
- b. 6 f. 10 Farrakhan, Louis articles 1985-1991
- b. 6 f. 11 Hemphill, Essex 1990-1995
Includes correspondence, articles, syllabus, cards, and flyers.
- b. 6 f. 12 Horne, Lena photographs
- b. 6 f. 13 Jackson, Michael articles
- b. 6 f. 14 Julian, Isaac articles 1989-1991
- b. 6 f. 15 Kidane, Michael correspondence 1997-1998
- b. 6 f. 16 King, Richard D. essay, "The Black Dot" 1985
- b. 6 f. 17 Lorde, Audre 1990
Includes correspondence, articles, and interview.
- b. 6 f. 18 Nelson, Stanley undated
Includes Madam C.J. Walker documentary proposal.
- b. 6 f. 19 Oluybayo, Babatu correspondence undated
- b. 6 f. 20 Riggs, Marlon 1988-2001
Includes correspondence, interview, contracts, articles, and photographs.
- b. 6 f. 21 Smith, Max correspondence 1991
- b. 6 f. 22 Sweet Honey in the Rock
Includes clippings and photographs.
- b. 6 f. 23 Thompson, Sidney 1988
- b. 6 f. 24 X, Malcolm clipping 1992

Professional papers (cont.)
Correspondence and individuals (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 25-26 Poetry and writing by others
- b. 6 f. 27 Miscellaneous

Research files

Arranged into two subseries: (1) HIV/AIDS and (2) General.

HIV/AIDS

- b. 6 f. 28 Africa
- b. 6 f. 29 Public service announcement
- b. 6 f. 30 General
- b. 6 f. 31 AZT 1989-1993
- Buddy Program
- b. 6 f. 33 Positive Immunity 1987-1988
- b. 6 f. 34 Urban Inc 1994-1995
- b. 6 f. 35 Whitman-Walker Clinic 1987

General

- b. 6 f. 36 African American culture
- b. 6 f. 37 Africa issues
- b. 6 f. 39 American politics
- b. 6 f. 40 Art of Living class
- b. 6 f. 41 B.L.A.C.K
- b. 6 f. 42-43 Black culture and politics
- b. 6 f. 44 Black community
- b. 6 f. 45 Black education
- b. 6 f. 46 Black men
- b. 6 f. 47 Black stereotypes
- b. 6 f. 48 Black youth
- b. 6 f. 49 Business information
- b. 6 f. 50 Capitalism
- b. 7 f. 1 Cartoons
- b. 7 f. 2 Catholic Church
- b. 7 f. 3 Center for Science in Public Interest
- b. 7 f. 4 China
- b. 7 f. 5 Cognitive styles
- b. 7 f. 6 Communication issues
- b. 7 f. 7 Corporations
- b. 7 f. 8 Cuba
- b. 7 f. 9 Egypt
- b. 7 f. 10 Feminism
- b. 7 f. 11 Hay, Louise
- b. 7 f. 12 Imperialism
- b. 7 f. 13 Indiana
- b. 7 f. 14 Institute for Karmic Guidance

Research files (cont.)

General (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 15 International issues
- b. 7 f. 16 Israel
- b. 7 f. 17 Jackson, Jesse campaign
- b. 7 f. 18 James, C. L. R
- b. 7 f. 19 Japan
- b. 7 f. 20 Journalism
- b. 7 f. 21 Ku Klux Klan
- b. 7 f. 22 Labor
- b. 7 f. 23 Mass media
- b. 7 f. 24 Melanin
- b. 7 f. 25 Men's issues
- b. 7 f. 26 Middle East
- b. 7 f. 27 Military
- b. 7 f. 28 Multi image
- b. 7 f. 29 NAACP
- b. 7 f. 30 National Black Media Coalition
- b. 7 f. 31 Natural Foods
- b. 7 f. 32 New Alliance Party
- b. 7 f. 33 New World Developers
- b. 7 f. 34 Nuclear power
- b. 7 f. 35 Pedagogy
- b. 7 f. 36 Plays
- b. 7 f. 37 Politics and mass media
- b. 7 f. 38 Prisons
- b. 7 f. 39 Psychic healing
- b. 7 f. 40 Public health
- b. 7 f. 41 Quotes
- b. 7 f. 42 Recipes
- b. 7 f. 43 Science
- b. 7 f. 44 Slide Tape Production
- b. 7 f. 45 Smoking
- b. 7 f. 46 Socialist
- b. 7 f. 47 South Africa
- b. 7 f. 48 Soviet Union
- b. 7 f. 49 Spirituality
- b. 7 f. 50 Tobacco
- b. 7 f. 51 Vegetarians
- b. 7 f. 52 Vietnam
- b. 7 f. 53 Visuals and ads
- b. 7 f. 54 Women's issues
- b. 7 f. 55 Youth