



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

Guide to the

**Hall Johnson collection**

1953-2001 [bulk 1953-1969]

Sc MG 811

**Summary**

**Creator:** Johnson, Hall, 1888-1970

**Title:** Hall Johnson collection

**Date:** 1953-2001 [bulk 1953-1969]

**Size:** 0.01 linear feet (1 folder)

**Source:** Gift of Floydean Kelley, December 2008.

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

**Abstract:** African-American composer, musician, and arranger, Hall Johnson is best known as a choral director and for his arrangements of spirituals. In 1925, Johnson formed the Hall Johnson Negro Choir, which performed spirituals in the traditional style. The Hall Johnson Choir, which he organized in 1928, performed on Broadway in Marc Connelly's play *Green Pastures* (1930), for which Johnson was music director. Johnson was known for his compositions as well as the articles he authored that discussed the history of spirituals and their performance practice. The Hall Johnson Collection contains a miscellaneous assortment of material including correspondence and news clippings regarding a workshop Johnson held in East St. Louis, Missouri, in 1969; and a letter to Katherine Dunham explaining his need to give more time to the inexperienced chorus. There is a music book with some holographic music; a poem he authored "Changelessness" (1956); and a few notes. This collection also includes biographical notes and personal recollections written in 2001, by Madeline Preston, a friend and member of his choir, along with a letter Johnson wrote to her in 1956.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Hall Johnson collection, Sc MG 811, 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, 2009, and Janice Quinter, 2010.

**Separated Materials:**

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

Transferred to the Sheet music collection, Sc MG 915, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Books Division:  
sheet music

## **Creator History**

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## **Scope and Content Note**

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## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American choral conductors  
African American composers  
African American musicians  
African Americans in the performing arts  
Authors, Black

### **Names**

Johnson, Hall, 1888-1970