



The New York Public Library
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

Rita Stevens papers

1910-1963 [bulk 1930s-1950s]

*T-Mss 2003-012

Compiled by Weatherly Stephan, 2015

Summary

Creator: Stevens, Rita

Title: Rita Stevens papers

Date: 1910-1963 [bulk 1930s-1950s]

Size: .84 linear feet (2 boxes)

Source: Gift of Jim Watters, 2003.

Abstract: Rita Stevens was a 20th century British actress. From 1948 through the early 1950s, Stevens played the roles of Stella and Blanche in *Anna Lucasta* during the West End production and British tours. The Rita Stevens papers date from 1910 to 1963 (bulk dates: 1930s-1950s) and contain day calendars, photographs, programs, and scrapbooks that document the life and career of the actress.

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Processing note: Compiled by Weatherly Stephan, 2015 Loose material in scrapbooks was removed and placed in folders.

Creator History

Rita Stevens was a 20th century British actress. She began her stage career in the revues *Blackbirds* and *Blackberries* before becoming a member of the London-based Negro Theatre Company. From 1948 through the early 1950s, Stevens played the roles of Stella and Blanche in *Anna Lucasta* during the West End production and British tours. Throughout the 1950s, she appeared in West End productions of *The Green Pastures* and *The Joshua Tree* as well as on the BBC Sunday-Night Theatre and ITV Television Playhouse.

Scope and Content Note

The Rita Stevens papers date from 1910 to 1963 (bulk dates: 1930s-1950s) and contain day calendars, photographs, programs, and scrapbooks that document the life and career of the actress. Many photographs are headshots of fellow musicians and performers, including members of the black arts communities in London and New York. Some photographs are autographed or have personalized inscriptions. Scrapbooks contain photographs, clippings, programs, and congratulatory telegrams that discuss Stevens's early childhood performances, her London stage appearances, and her social life and friendships with fellow performers.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged by document type.

Key Terms

Subjects

Actresses, Black

Black theater -- Great Britain

Blacks in the performing arts -- Great Britain

Theater -- Great Britain -- 20th century

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs

Programs (documents)

Scrapbooks

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Day Calendars 1958-1963
- b. 1 f. 2-4 Photographs 1920s-1950s
- b. 1 f. 5 Programs and Clippings 1940s-1950s
- b. 2 f. 1-3 Scrapbooks 1910-1959