Summary

Creator: Truesdale, Ernest, 1926-1988

Title: Ernest "Tad" Truesdale papers

Date: 1945-1987

Size: 2.6 linear feet

Source: Gift, Charlotte Evans, 07/29/88 Gift, Charlotte Evans, 01/--/91 Gift, Charlotte Evans, 02/--/91

Abstract: Ernest Truesdale, whose stage name was Tad Truesdale, was a dancer, choreographer, actor, writer, producer and director. He studied acting at the New School for Social Research, and dance with Charles Weidman and at the Katherine Dunham School. A versatile performer, Truesdale’s career dealt mostly with African, calypso and African American aspects of theater. His work primarily was in New Jersey and New York City. As a dancer, he had two dance acts in the 1950’s: Truesdale and Francine, and Truesdale and Theral, and also danced in Broadway musicals, including "St. Louis Woman" and "Carmen Jones," and toured Europe and Asia with a variety of shows including the Harlem Blackbirds. He was a student member of the American Negro Theatre Company and appeared in the Broadway production of "Anna Lucasta." Truesdale also performed in several Off-Broadway productions, television and made recordings. From 1975-1984 he worked with La Mama Experimental Theatre Club in New York City as playwright and director. He also was active with dramas in the public schools. The Ernest "Tad" Truesdale Papers primarily document the performer’s professional career and includes biographical information, playscripts, news clippings, reviews, programs, correspondence and financial records. There are contracts (1949-1953), a script, letters and news clippings related to the American Negro Theatre; programs and news clippings related to Truesdale’s career as a dancer; letters and news clippings pertaining to the Harlem Blackbirds and their performances in Ceylon (1952); and news clippings about his performance in New York City’s African Room with the Richie Havens Trio. Additionally, the collection includes information about the CAN DO festival held in New Jersey of which Truesdale was director (1966); and about his involvement with the La Mama Theatre. The many scripts contained in Truesdale’s papers are ones which he either wrote or performed, including "Daddy! Daddy!" which he authored and was performed at La Mama, “The Godsong,” a gospel rock revival of James Weldon Johnson’s "God’s Trombones" (1975), "The Journeychain Show" (1976), "Nine Days of Ilo" (1976), and "The Manhattan Paul Revue" (1984). Of interest is a portfolio entitled "Back to the ANT on the Hill."
the American Negro Theatre. The portfolio consists of programs, news clippings, photographs, tickets and press releases (1945-1987). Several of Truesdale's high school papers and yearbooks complete this collection.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Preferred citation:** Ernest "Tad" Truesdale papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

**Creator History**

Ernest Truesdale, whose stage name was Tad Truesdale, was a dancer, choreographer, actor, writer, producer and director. He studied acting at the New School for Social Research, and dance with Charles Weidman and at the Katherine Dunham School. A versatile performer, Truesdale's career dealt mostly with African, calypso and African American aspects of theater. His work primarily was in New Jersey and New York City. As a dancer, he had two dance acts in the 1950's: Truesdale and Francine, and Truesdale and Theral, and also danced in Broadway musicals, including "St. Louis Woman" and "Carmen Jones," and toured Europe and Asia with a variety of shows including the Harlem Blackbirds. He was a student member of the American Negro Theatre Company and appeared in the Broadway production of "Anna Lucasta." Truesdale also performed in several Off-Broadway productions, television and made recordings. From 1975-1984 he worked with La Mama Experimental Theatre Club in New York City as playwright and director. He also was active with dramatics in the public schools.

**Scope and Content Note**

The Ernest "Tad" Truesdale Papers primarily document the performer's professional career and includes biographical information, playscripts, news clippings, reviews, programs, correspondence and financial records. There are contracts (1949-1953), a script, letters and news clippings related to the American Negro Theatre; programs and news clippings related to Truesdale's career as a dancer; letters and news clippings pertaining to the Harlem Blackbirds and their performances in Ceylon (1952); and news clippings about his performance in New York City's African Room with the Richie Havens Trio. Additionally, the collection includes information about the CAN DO festival held in New Jersey of which Truesdale was director (1966); and about his involvement with the La Mama Theatre. The many scripts contained in Truesdale's papers are ones which he either wrote or performed, including "Daddy! Daddy!" which he authored and was performed at La Mama, "The Godsong," a gospel rock revival of James Weldon Johnson's "God's Trombones" (1975), "The Journeychain Show" (1976), "Nine Days of Ilo" (1976), and "The Manhattan Paul Revue" (1984). Of interest is a portfolio entitled "Back to the ANT on the Hill" referring to Truesdale's theatrical origins with the American Negro Theatre. The portfolio consists of programs, news clippings, photographs, tickets and press releases (1945-1987). Several of Truesdale's high school papers and yearbooks complete this collection.

**Key Terms**

**Subjects**

African American actors  
African American dramatists  
African American entertainers  
African American theater
African Americans in the performing arts
Dancers -- United States
Scripts

**Titles**
Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

**Names**
Truesdale, Ernest, 1926-1988
American Negro Theatre
La Mama Experimental Theatre Club