



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

Guide to the

**Lorenzo Tucker papers**

1928-1986 [bulk ca. 1970 - ca. 1980]

Sc MG 453

## Summary

**Creator:** Tucker, Lorenzo

**Title:** Lorenzo Tucker papers

**Date:** 1928-1986 [bulk ca. 1970 - ca. 1980]

**Size:** 3.4 linear feet

**Source:** Purchase, Pauline Segura Tucker, March 28, 1988

**Abstract:** The Lorenzo Tucker papers reflect portions of Tucker's screen and stage career and also discuss his service during World War II and his varied occupations in the 1960's-1980's. There is no original material from his early acting career with Oscar Micheaux, but there are several scrapbooks representing his theatrical performances, including the touring production (British Isles) of the American Negro Theatre's "Anna Lucasta," and his role as road manager in the 1950's for "Springtime for Henry" and an all-black production of "Harvey" starring Dooley Wilson. Another scrapbook features Tucker's World War II experience as a trainee in MacDill Field, Florida and entertainment specialist via programs, clippings and other printed material.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. To request access to materials in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, please visit: [http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request\\_access](http://archives.nypl.org/scm/request_access)

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Lorenzo Tucker papers, Sc MG 453, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

## Creator History

Born in 1907 in Philadelphia, Lorenzo Tucker was a stage and screen actor, appearing in eleven all-black movies (1927-1936) produced by film pioneer Oscar Micheaux. Frequently appearing as the romantic lead, he was billed as the "Black Valentino." Tucker performed in vaudeville as well as the legitimate theater. In addition to acting and directing his own troupe in the 1950's, he was in the stage production of Mae West's "The Constant Sinner." In the 1970's-1980's he gained national recognition

for his early movie career.

Tucker served in the infantry and as an entertainment specialist during World War II. Later he worked as a photographer; and from 1961 to 1974 Tucker was an assistant to the Chief Medical Examiner of New York City, Dr. Milton Helpert. At other times Tucker's varied career and economic necessity led him to become a broadcaster, house painter and security guard. Tucker died in 1986 at age 79.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The Lorenzo Tucker papers reflect portions of Tucker's screen and stage career and also discuss his service during World War II and his varied occupations in the 1960's-1980's. There is no original material from his early acting career with Oscar Micheaux, but there are several scrapbooks representing his theatrical performances, including the touring production (British Isles) of the American Negro Theatre's "Anna Lucasta," and his role as road manager in the 1950's for "Springtime for Henry" and an all-black production of "Harvey" starring Dooley Wilson. Another scrapbook features Tucker's World War II experience as a trainee in MacDill Field, Florida and entertainment specialist via programs, clippings and other printed material.

The collection also documents Tucker's efforts to share his knowledge about black film and theater, and correspondence from the 1970's and 1980's references his early acting career. There is a folder of letters from an actor friend, Jay Flash Riley, 1979-1980, and a limited number of letters regarding his work as a photographer. The recognition in the 1970's-1980's for his pioneering work as an actor is documented in awards and appreciations presented to him by such organizations as the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame and L.A.-D.C. Connection, Inc.

The collection includes programs and playbills from films and theatrical presentations in which Tucker acted, was the master of ceremonies or the official photographer, 1931-1979. There are also scripts, several authored by Tucker. Included are scripts for plays in which he performed such as "Harvey" and "O! Man Satan," and a number of radio dramatizations and television programs.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Actors -- United States  
African American actors  
African American entertainers  
African American motion picture actors and actresses  
African American theater  
African Americans in the performing arts  
Black author  
Theater -- United States

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Scrapbooks  
Scripts  
Television scripts

### **Names**

Riley, Jay Flash

Tucker, Lorenzo