



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

Guide to the

Maya Angelou papers

1958-1990

Sc MG 830

Summary

Creator: Angelou, Maya

Title: Maya Angelou papers

Date: 1958-1990

Size: 199 linear feet (199 record cartons)

Source: Purchase, Maya Angelou Foundation, 2010

Abstract: Maya Angelou Papers consist of original manuscripts, computer generated typescripts, galleys and proofs including "I Know why the Caged Bird Sings," "Hallelujah the Welcome Table," "Cookbook," "I Shall Not Be Moved," "A Song Flung Up to Heaven," "Heart of a Woman," and "All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes," as well as manuscripts for unpublished work and dozens of poems. Of interest is a voluminous file on Angelou's inaugural poem "On The Pulse of Morning" from creation to public reaction. There is also personal and professional correspondence with James Baldwin, Dudley Randall, Hoyt Fuller, Chester Himes, Mari Evans, Rosa Guy, and Malcolm X, Gordon Parks, jazz singer Abby Lincoln, Sarah Wright, Frank Marshall Davis, and her editors among others.

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

Conditions Governing Access:

Fan Mail is closed.

Preferred citation: [Item], Maya Angelou papers, Sc MG 830, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Creator History

Maya Angelou (1928-2014) was one of the most renowned and celebrated voices in American literature. She was a poet, memoirist, novelist, educator, dramatist, producer, actress, dancer, historian, filmmaker, and civil rights activist.

In the mid-fifties, Angelou toured Europe with a production of the opera "Porgy and Bess." She studied modern dance with Martha Graham, danced with Alvin Ailey on television variety shows and, in 1957, recorded her first album, "Calypso Lady." In 1958, she moved to New York, where she joined the Harlem Writers Guild, acted in the historic Off-Broadway production of Jean Genet's *The Blacks* and wrote and performed "Cabaret for Freedom." Inspired by James Baldwin to write her story, Angelou published her first book, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" (1970) to international acclaim and enormous popular success. Her published verse, non-fiction, and fiction include more than 30 bestselling titles. Among her accomplishments, Angelou wrote the screenplay and composed the score for the 1972 film "Georgia, Georgia." Her script, the first by an African American woman ever to be filmed, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. She made numerous appearances on television and in films including Alex Haley's "Roots" (1977) and John Singleton's "Poetic Justice" (1993). The feature film, "Down in the Delta," was Angelou's directorial debut. In 2008, she composed poetry for and narrated the award-winning documentary "The Black Candle," directed by M.K. Asante.

Angelou served on two presidential committees, was awarded the Presidential Medal of Arts in 2000, the Lincoln Medal in 2008, and has received three Grammy Awards. Angelou composed and read her poem "On the Pulse of the Morning" at President William (Bill) Clinton's first inaugural ceremony in 1993.

Scope and Content Note

Maya Angelou Papers consist of original manuscripts, computer generated typescripts, galleys and proofs including "I Know why the Caged Bird Sings," "Hallelujah the Welcome Table," "Cookbook," "I Shall Not Be Moved," "A Song Flung Up to Heaven," "Heart of a Woman," and "All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes," as well as manuscripts for unpublished work and dozens of poems. Of interest is a voluminous file on Angelou's inaugural poem "On The Pulse of Morning" from creation to public reaction. There is also personal and professional correspondence with James Baldwin, Dudley Randall, Hoyt Fuller, Chester Himes, Mari Evans, Rosa Guy, and Malcolm X, Gordon Parks, jazz singer Abby Lincoln, Sarah Wright, Frank Marshall Davis, and her editors among others.

A considerable amount of the collection contains material about Angelou and includes newspaper clippings, magazine articles, reviews, and other printed material regarding her publications and appearances. Also significant are requests to read or perform her work at universities and organizations. Additionally, there are office files and materials pertaining to Angelou's the Hallmark greeting card series, as well as other projects.

Arrangement: Papers organized into four series: I. Biographical Information; II. Writings; III. Correspondence, and IV. Professional Files

Key Terms

Subjects

African American actresses

African American authors
African American entertainers
African American poets
African American women authors
African American women motion picture producers and directors
African American women poets -- 20th century
African Americans in motion pictures
African Americans in the motion picture industry
Black author
Poets, American -- 20th century
Poets, Black -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Letters
Manuscripts
Play scripts
Playscripts
Screenplays

Names

Angelou, Maya
Angelou, Maya. All God's children need traveling shoes. All God's children need traveling shoes.
Angelou, Maya. Cookbook. Cookbook.
Angelou, Maya. Even the stars look lonesome. Even the stars look lonesome.
Angelou, Maya. Gather together in my name. Gather together in my name.
Angelou, Maya. Hallelujah the welcome table. Hallelujah the welcome table.
Angelou, Maya. Heart of a woman. Heart of a woman.
Angelou, Maya. I know why the caged bird sings. I know why the caged bird sings.
Angelou, Maya. I shall not be moved. I shall not be moved.
Angelou, Maya. Just give me a cool drink of water 'fore I diiie. Just give me a cool drink of water 'fore I diiie.
Angelou, Maya. Oh pray my wings are gonna fit me well. Oh pray my wings are gonna fit me well.
Angelou, Maya. Shaker, why don't you sing?. Shaker, why don't you sing?
Angelou, Maya. Song flung up to heaven. Song flung up to heaven.
Angelou, Maya. Swingin' and singin' and getting merry like Christmas. Swingin' and singin' and getting merry like Christmas.
Angelou, Maya. Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now. Wouldn't take nothing for my journey now.
Baldwin, James, 1924-1987
Davis, Frank Marshall, 1905-1987
Evans, Mari, 1923-2017
Guy, Rosa
Mayfield, Julian, 1928-1984
Sanchez, Sonia, 1934-
Walker, Alice, 1944-
X, Malcolm, 1925-1965