Summary

Creator: Cook, Charles, 1917-1991

Title: Charles "Cookie" Cook collection

Date: 1920s-1995 [bulk 1970s-1990]

Size: 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Gift of Circuit Productions and Susan Goldbetter, August 2006.

Abstract: Charles "Cookie" Cook, a vaudeville tap and acrobatic dancer and teacher for more than fifty years, began performing as a child with Garbage and the Two Cans and Sarah Venable and Her Picks. In 1930, he and Ernest (Brownie) Brown formed the headline dance and comedy team Cook and Brown. Their act, seen in such venues as New York's Cotton Club, combined tumbling, dance, and comedic patter. Cook was one of the members of The Copasetics, the fraternity of black entertainers that was influential in the revival of tap dancing in the late 1970s-1980s. Cook also performed in the film Cotton Club, at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and at a 1990 tap festival in New York. He died at age 77 in 1991. The Charles "Cookie" Cook Collection is actually a scrapbook that has been dismantled. The material focuses primarily on Cookie's later years with few primary source documents. There are several letters, telegrams, and postcards expressing appreciation for his performances, but no letters written by Cook. The collection also includes programs for performances in which Cook appeared, especially with the tap dance group The Copasetics in New York City, and other venues in the United States and Rome (1980-1995), as well as flyers advertising for a variety of performances in which Cook was featured (1961-1979). There are also programs for shows where jazz musicians, singers, and other artists appeared, in addition to news clippings discussing Cook, other tap dancers, and entertainers.

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/divisions/scm/request_access

Preferred citation: [Item], Charles "Cookie" Cook collection, Sc MG 99, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public
Creator History

Charles "Cookie" Cook, a vaudeville tap and acrobatic dancer and teacher for more than fifty years, began performing as a child with Garbage and the Two Cans and Sarah Venable and Her Picks. In 1930, he and Ernest (Brownie) Brown formed the headline dance and comedy team Cook and Brown. Their act, seen in such venues as New York's Cotton Club, combined tumbling, dance, and comedic patter. Cook was one of the members of The Copasetics, the fraternity of black entertainers that was influential in the revival of tap dancing in the late 1970s-1980s. Cook also performed in the film Cotton Club, at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and at a 1990 tap festival in New York. He died at age 77 in 1991.

Scope and Content Note

The Charles "Cookie" Cook Collection is actually a scrapbook that has been dismantled. The material focuses primarily on Cookie's later years with few primary source documents. There are several letters, telegrams, and postcards expressing appreciation for his performances, but no letters written by Cook. The collection also includes programs for performances in which Cook appeared, especially with the tap dance group The Copasetics in New York City, and other venues in the United States and Rome (1980-1995), as well as flyers advertising for a variety of performances in which Cook was featured (1961-1979). There are also programs for shows where jazz musicians, singers, and other artists appeared, in addition to news clippings discussing Cook, other tap dancers, and entertainers.

Key Terms

Subjects
African American dancers
African American entertainers
African Americans in the performing arts
Tap dancing

Names
Cook, Charles, 1917-1991
Copasetics
Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 Letters 1967-1982
- b. 1 f. 2 Programs 1980-1995
- b. 1 f. 3 Flyers 1979
- b. 1 f. 4 Other programs 1955-1990
- b. 1 f. 5 Clippings 1920s-1990