

**SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH
IN BLACK CULTURE
RARE BOOKS, MANUSCRIPTS,
AND ARCHIVES SECTION**

ACCESSION SHEET

Accession # SCM 90-38

Title (note if Additions to a collection) Alma John Papers

Approximate inclusive dates 1930-1980

Date of receipt August 20, 1990

Volume on arrival 11 boxes

Received from Alma John Estate

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 4 r.c.s, 1 shoe box, and 2 archival boxes

Restrictions none

Description

Papers of Alma Vessels Nomsa John (1906-1986) containing personal papers; diaries and datebooks, 1950-1980; correspondence, 1930s-1980s; radio scripts from her various shows on WWRL; typescripts and clippings of her columns; and printed matter and newsletters from The National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, The Black Nurse Association and other African-American nursing organizations. There are also materials on Alma John Workshop including, newsletters, clippings, and Administrative Materials.

Alma John was born in 1906, in Philadelphia, the eldest of nine children from a poor family. After graduating from high school, she used the money she had earned to come to New York to study nursing. She graduated from New York University and the Harlem Hospital School of Nursing and became a registered nurse in 1929. She then worked as a staff nurse at Harlem Hospital until 1939 when she was dismissed from her job for trying to organize workers around a demand for better working conditions and higher wages. She went on to become the director of the School for Practical Nurses at the Upper Manhattan YWCA. Alma John was the first African-American woman to become a director of a school of practical nursing in New York State.

In 1946 she accepted a position with the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses as executive director, traveling the country in search of educational employment opportunities for African-American professional nurses. As part of her efforts she persuaded NBC to grant her a half hour time slot to do a program to discuss problems African American nurses encounter. She wrote the script for the program, "Brown Women in White," which was aired on 69 stations. In 1952 she got her first radio program on station WWRL, covering everything from religion to teen-agers. Among her many awards was the McCall's Magazine Golden Microphone award.

In addition to being a nurse and radio personality, Alma John wrote regular columns, and hosted and eventually produced the television program "Black Pride." She also created Alma John Workshop, Inc., with a program geared toward improved public health, education and community involvement.

In all of her endeavors, she sought to make people aware of the importance

of education and active within their communities. Thus, she lived by the credo she espoused, "if you know teach, if you don't know learn. Each one reach one. Each one teach one."

Special Formats Photographs Maps Audio Tapes Films
 Graphics Artifacts Machine-readable records
Other (List) Record albums

Accessioned by: Karen Clark

Date: August 9, 1993

Container List

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> | |
|------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | | PERSONAL PAPERS |
| | 1 | Biographical Information |
| | 2 | Academic Writings |
| | 3 | Certificates |
| | 4-11 | Scrapbooks |
| | 12 | Scrapbook by Victor Infante |
| | 13 | Poems to Alma John |
| | 14 | Cornwall Lisley John |
| 2 | | Diaries and Datebooks, 1950-1980 |
| 3 | | Guest Book, 1950-1960 |
| 4 | | CORRESPONDENCE |
| | | [Boxes 4,5 Restricted until processed] |
| | 1 | 1930's |
| | 2 | 1940's |
| | 3 | 1950's |
| | 4-7 | 1960's |
| | 8-18 | 1970's |
| 5 | 1-3 | 1980's |
| | 4 | undated Telegrams |
| | 5 | 1950's |
| | 6 | 1960's |
| | 7 | 1970's |
| | 8 | undated |
| | 9 | Student Thankyou Letters, n.d. |
| | 10 | Stationery |
| 6 | | Fan Mail, 1970's |
| 7 | | PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES |
| | | Nursing |
| | | Black Nurses Association |
| | 1 | Printed Matter |
| | 2 | Newsletters |
| | 3 | Harlem Hospital School of Nursing National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses |
| | 4 | Printed Matter |
| | 5 | Newsletters |
| | | African-American Nurses |
| | 6 | Printed Matter |
| | 7 | Clippings |
| | | Columns |
| | 8 | "Alma John Says" Typescripts |
| | 9 | "Alma Says" Clippings |
| | 10 | "Essence of Living" Typescripts |

Container List

| <u>Box</u> | <u>Folder</u> | |
|------------|---------------|---|
| 7 | 11 | "Essence of Living" Clippings |
| | 12 | "Beauty Wise" Clippings |
| | 13 | Miscellaneous Typescripts Radio |
| | 14-15 | Alma John Shows Schedules |
| | 16 | Alma John Radio Scripts |
| | 17 | "Alma John Talks To Teens" Scripts |
| | 18 | "Alma John Talks to Teens" Background |
| | 19 | "The Homemaker's Club" Scripts |
| | 20 | Radio Series Proposals |
| | 21 | WWRL |
| | 22 | "Black Pride" - Printed Matter |
| | 23 | "Helen in Paris" - Printed Matter |
| | | Alma John Workshop |
| | 24 | Administrative Material |
| | 25 | Proposal for Metric Education Funds |
| | 26 | Printed Matter |
| | 27 | Newsletters |
| | 28 | Flyers |
| | 29 | Clippings |
| | 30 | Itineraries |
| | 31 | Ephemera |
| | 32-33 | Clippings re Alma John |
| | 34 | Community Based Projects - Printed Matter |
| 8 | | Journals and Newsletters re Alma John |
| | | Flyers re Alma John |
| | | Programs re Alma John |
| | | Ephemera re Alma John |
| | Oversize | Certificates |
| | Folder | |
| | 35 | Certificates |
| 36 | Mailing Lists | |

SEPARATION RECORD

The following items were removed from:

Name of Collection/Papers Alma John Papers

Accession Number SCM 90-38

Donor: Alma John Estate

Date received: August 20, 1990

Date transferred: August 9, 1993

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

Schomburg Library:

2 record carton boxes of newsletters, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, journals, and books.

Schomburg Art and Artifacts Division:

1 envelope of stamps, posters, postcards, name plates, pins, stickers, tickets, placard, a certificate, miscellaneous buttons and pendants

Schomburg Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division:

1 envelope containing 3 records and 2 boxes of super 8 movie film.

Nine cartons of audiotapes, videotapes, 45 rpm and long-playing records

Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:

4 boxes of photographs, slides, and negatives, including pictures of Alma John and her husband Cornwall Lisley John.

Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division:

Programs, music scores and lyrics.

Accessioned by: Karen Clark

Date: August 9, 1993

SEPARATION RECORD

The following items were removed from:

Name of Collection/Papers Alma John (Additions)

Accession Number SCM 94-27

Donor: Estate of Alma John

Gift X Purchase _____

Date received: July 1994

Date transferred: February 1996

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

Schomburg Library

Three boxes of books

Schomburg Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division

Over sixty-six audiotapes (see attached list)

Schomburg Photographs and Print Division:

1 photograph, _____ slides

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Accessioned by: Chandra Buie

Date: 2-10-96

MANUSCRIPTS, ARCHIVES AND RARE BOOKS DIVISION

SEPARATION RECORD

The following items were removed from:

Name of Collection/Papers Alma John

Accession Number SCM80-16

Donor: Alma John

Date received: 1980

Date transferred: 1980

The item(s) listed below have been sent to the division indicated, either to be retained or disposed of there. Any items that should receive special disposition are clearly marked.

Schomburg Library:

"Original Pageants and Plays for Young People" by Alma Polk (pamphlet)

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Other:

Programs to the Program and Play Collection (see list)

Calendar to the Calendar Collection (see list)

numerous flyers, clippings, invitations to the Vertical File

Broadsides to Broadside Collection (see list)

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Accessioned by: Diana Lachatanere

Date: 1980