



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Gary Lambert "Pete" Nugent papers

1928-1973

(S) *MGZMD 440

Compiled by Susan M. Kline, 2016.

Summary

Creator: Nugent, Pete

Title: Gary Lambert "Pete" Nugent papers

Date: 1928-1973

Size: 1.3 linear feet (1 box, 1 volume)

Source: Gift of the Estate of Thomas H. Wirth, 2015.

Abstract: The Pete Nugent papers (1928-1973) provide a glimpse into Nugent's career as a tap dancer. The collection contains correspondence with Mamie McDowell, photographs, Nugent's passport and address book, an announcement for the opening of his dance studio, financial records, and other ephemera. Two folders pertain to This is the Army and include photographs, a program, and a list of cast members. Photos, contracts, correspondence, and a business card reflect Nugent's time as manager of the Temptations. Several items are inscribed to Nugent's older brother Richard Bruce Nugent, a Harlem Renaissance painter and writer.

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Creator History

Gary Lambert "Pete" Nugent (1909-1973) was an African-American tap dancer who was prominent in the 1930s. Born in Washington D.C. on July 16, 1909, Nugent left home as a teenager to begin dancing with the Theatre Owners Booking Association (T.O.B.A.) circuit for African American vaudeville performers.

In 1928 Nugent met Irving "Peaches" Beaman and the two formed a duo and later became a trio, "Pete, Peaches and Miller" with the addition of Duke Miller in 1931. The three performed together in class act

routines until Miller's death in 1937.

Nugent continued his solo career while also coaching and teaching other dancers. During World War II, Nugent toured with Irving Berlin's musical comedy *This is the Army* and insisted the show be integrated. In 1949 he completed business administration courses through the evening program at the City University of New York.

As musical and dance styles changed, Nugent retired in the early 1950s but came out of retirement to participate with other tap legends in a tap dance history performance at the 1962 Newport Jazz Festival. He continued to work with other dancers and opened his New York City dance studio, Dance Craft, in 1955 with actor and tap dancer Charles "Honi" Coles. In the late 1960s Nugent worked as the road manager for the Temptations and spent some time teaching dance to children in the South Bronx. He died on April 25, 1973.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American dancers
Dancers -- United States -- 20th century
Tap dancing -- United States

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Photographs

Occupations

Tap dancers

Names

Beaman, Irving
Miller, Duke
Pete, Peaches and Duke