



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

Guide to the

Langston Hughes collection

1926-1967

Sc Micro R-977

Processed by Stanton F. Biddle and Paul Williams with the assistance of New York Urban Corps Intern Claire Harley, 1972.

Summary

Creator: Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967

Title: Langston Hughes collection

Date: 1926-1967

Size: 0.25 linear feet (4 reels)

Source: Gift of Langston Hughes.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: Langston Hughes was a poet, author, playwright, and songwriter. This collection represents the vertical file holdings of the Schomburg as of September 1, 1971, and includes personal and professional material.

Conditions Governing Access:

Researchers are restricted to microfilm copy.

Preferred citation: [Item], Langston Hughes collection, Sc Micro R-977, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English In multiple languages.

Processing note: Processed by Stanton F. Biddle and Paul Williams with the assistance of New York Urban Corps Intern Claire Harley, 1972.

Related Materials:

Langston Hughes collection : additions, Sc MG 129, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Creator History

Langston Hughes is one of the world's most wildly acclaimed Black writers. His writings included poems, plays, short stories, syndicated columns, biographies and two autobiographies, children's books, anthologies, histories, songs, and almost any other mode of literary expression. His works have been presented on the stage and screen, radio and television, and on phonograph recordings by some of the greatest artists of our times.

Born in Joplin, Missouri, on February 1, 1902, Langston Hughes grew up in Kansas, Missouri, and Ohio. His literary career began as class poet in the eighth grade and continued at Cleveland's Central High School where he was a member of the school magazine staff and editor of the class yearbook. His first poem to be published in a national magazine, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", appeared in *The Crisis* in 1921. He was awarded *Opportunity* Magazine's First Prize in Poetry in 1925 for his work "The Weary Blues", which was later used as the title for his first book of poems.

Hughes did not enjoy his first experience at college so he dropped out of Columbia University and hopped a freighter to parts unknown. After a few months in Africa, France, and Italy, he returned to the states and enrolled at Lincoln University (Pennsylvania). It was during this time that his talents came to the attention of the eminent poet Vachel Lindsay who was so immediately impressed by Hughes's work that he read three of Hughes's poems on a program in which he was participating at the Little Theatre of the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington. Hughes was working at the hotel as a busboy at the time. When he graduated from Lincoln University in 1929, he had won the Palms Intercollegiate Poetry Award and in 1931, he received the Harmon Gold Award for Literature. Dr. Charles A. Beard included him in his selection of America's 25 most "interesting personages with a socially conscious attitude." On October 24, 1935, Hughes's first play, *Mulatto*, opened at the Vanderbilt Theatre on Broadway and that same year he received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Over the years he had his short stories, poems, and articles published in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *Theatre Arts*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Esquire*, *Ebony*, and *The Nation*. He wrote weekly columns which appeared in the *Chicago Defender* and the *New York Post*. His wide acclaim as a writer put him in great demand on the national and international lecture circuit.

Hughes wrote for radio, motion pictures, Broadway revues, and musical numbers; and for artists such as Marian Anderson, Lawrence Tibbett, and Muriel Rahn. During the war, he created several radio scripts for the Writers' War Board and composed a ballad opera for the British Broadcasting Company. He wrote the lyrics for the Broadway musical *Street Scene* and the librettos for the operas *Troubled Island* and *The Barrier*.

In addition to the Guggenheim Fellowship, Hughes received other awards including a Rosenwald Fellowship, 1941; American Academy of Arts and Letters grant, 1946; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's Spingarn Medal, 1960; and membership in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, 1961. In addition to *Mulatto*, Hughes also wrote the plays *Don't You Want to Be Free*, *Simply Heavenly*, *Shakespeare in Harlem*, *Black Nativity*, *Tambourines to Glory*, and *Jericho Jim Crow*.

At the time of his death in 1967, Hughes had 25 titles listed in *Books in Print* and his works have been translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Chinese, and Japanese. He was one of the nation's truly outstanding literary figures whose work was equally popular throughout the world.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of biographical information about Hughes's life and activities; his writing;

professional appearances; printed matter; and some information on sources of Hughes's material in other institutions in the United States.

Arrangement: Organized into seven series: I. Biographical; II. Writing; III. Programs; IV. Works presented; V. Material in other libraries; VI. Criticism; and VII. Miscellaneous.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American authors
African American dramatists
African American poets
American drama -- African American authors
American literature -- African American authors
American poetry -- African American authors
Authors, Black
Jazz
Lyricists -- United States

Names

Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967

Container List

r. 1 Biographical

This series includes all material dealing with Langston Hughes's life and activities. It consists primarily of articles about the writer, biographical sketches, human interest stories, and obituaries. Many of the items are in foreign languages and thus illustrate the international popularity and acceptance which Hughes enjoyed.

Writing

This series is the largest group of records in the collection. It consists of bibliographies, manuscripts, typescripts, and drafts of writing as well as reviews of some of the published works. It has been subdivided into eleven subseries based on the different forms of literary expression represented. There is some overlap in the subseries as in cases where a particular item would logically fit into one of several categories.

Arranged into 11 subseries: (1) Bibliographies; (2) Correspondence; (3) Articles; (4) Books; (5) Plays; (6) Poems; (7) Reviews; (8) Reviews by Hughes; (9) Short stories; (10) Songs; and (11) Miscellaneous.

r. 1 Bibliographies

Correspondence

r. 1 Received

r. 1 Sent

Articles

r. 1 *Chicago Defender*

r. 1 *New York Post*

r. 1 Other

Books

Arranged alphabetically by title.

r. 1 *Ask Your Mama*

Includes reviews.

r. 1 *The Book of Negro Folklore sources of material*

Famous American Negroes 1953

r. 1 Clippings of source material 1953 Summer

r. 1 Preliminary notes 1953 Summer

r. 1 First draft 1953 September 4

r. 1 Pages revised and title changed 1953 September 10

r. 1 Corrections and additional material 1953 September 12

r. 1 Final draft 1953 September

r. 1 Author's copy, revised pages inserted with editorial cuts 1953 October

r. 1 Extra pages ca. 1953

r. 1 Chapter selected for magazine publication 1953 September

r. 1 Draft with marginal notes by editors in pencil 1953 October

r. 1 Correspondence ca. 1953

r. 2 Photos and negatives ca. 1953

r. 2 Galley proof 1953 December 11

r. 2 Final copy as sent to publisher 1953 October

Writing (cont.)

Books (cont.)

Famous American Negroes (cont.)

- r. 2 *Galley proof* 1953 December 23
May be out of order on the microfilm reel; may come after *Fight for Freedom*.
- r. 2 *Famous Negro Music Makers* 1956
Includes reviews.
- r. 2 *Fight for Freedom*
- r. 2 *The First Book of Africa* 1958
- r. 2 *The First Book of the Caribbean* 1954
- r. 2 *The First Book of Jazz*
Includes an early draft and reviews.
- r. 2 *The First Book of Negroes* 1952 March
Includes final draft and reviews.
- r. 2 *Freedom Train, booklet of poems*
- r. 2 *Langston Hughes Reader, suggested material for*
Not Without Laughter
- r. 2 Second draft as submitted and published by Alfred A. Knopf
- r. 2 Fourth draft
- r. 2 Galley
- r. 2 *Rhythms of the World*
- r. 2 *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*
- r. 2 *Simple Takes a Wife*
- r. 2 *Tambourines to Glory* 1956 September 30

Plays

Arranged alphabetically by title.

- r. 2 *Bars Between*
- r. 2 *Black Nativity (or Wasn't That a Mighty Day)*
Includes reviews.
- r. 3 *Esther*
- r. 3 *Jericho Jim Crow*
Includes reviews.
- r. 3 *Mulatto*
- r. 3 *The Organizer*
- r. 3 *Prodigal Son*
Includes reviews.
- r. 3 *Saint James, Sixty Years Young*
- r. 3 *Scuffle'town Outlaws*
- r. 3 *Simply Heavenly*
- r. 3 *The Sun Do Move*
- r. 3 *Wasn't That a Mighty Day*

Poems

Arranged alphabetically by title.

Writing (cont.)
Poems (cont.)

- r. 3 **A-I**
Includes "Acceptance"; "African Jesus"; "African Lady"; "Alarm Clock..." (by Regino Pedroso, English adaptation from Spanish by Langston Hughes); "Alas! Alack!"; "All Kinds of Women"; "Anthology of Negro Poets"; "As Befits a Man"; Associated Negro Press's poems by Hughes including "Backlash Blues", "Balada Del Casero", "La Balado de Henry Moore", "Ballad of Lenin", "Ballad of Negro History", "Ballad of the Brown King", "Ballad of Ozie Powell", "Ballad of Roosevelt", "Ballad of the Seven Songs", "Ballad of Two Thieves and Ultimatum: Kid to Kid", "The Ballot: Saturday Night", "Barefoot Blues", "Benediction", "Big Timer (The Mood, and the Poem)", "Birmingham Sunday", "Black Panther", "Blues to Song Lyrics", "Baby I'm Your All", "Blues at Dawn", "Blues Overflow My Cup", "Down the Line Blues", "Glad I Love You Blues", "I Got the Head Ache, Heart Ache, Back Ache, and the Lonesome Misery", "Picnic on the Sand", "Regardless", and "Winter Morning Blues"; "Border Line"; "Bouquet"; "Brother"; "Christmas Story"; "City"; "Consider Me"; "Could Be Blues"; "Dark Youth of the U.S.A."; "Days of Our Years"; "Death in Harlem"; "Death in Yorkville"; "Dinner Guest: Me"; "Doorknobs"; "Do You Reckon"; "Dream of Freedom"; "Ennui"; "Ethiopia Marches On"; "Evenin' Air Blues"; "For Billie Holiday"; "Freedom Land" (also includes a letter to the Greenwich Mews Theatre concerning the poem); "Freedom's Plow"; "Freedom Train" and reviews; "Glory Around His Head" simplified version of the poem and Bible text; "Glory Around His Head (An Easter by Meyerowitz)"; "Good Morning Blues"; gospel and religious poems including "Mystery", "Testimonial", "Judgement Day", "Prayer Meeting", "Fire", "Consider Me", "Projection", "Sinner", and "Feet o' Jesus"; "The Guys Hughes Likes"; "Harlem Call (After the 1964 Riots)"; "The Herdsmen" (for *Wasn't That a Mighty Day*); "Homecoming"; "I Await the Day"; "Incomplete List of Tropical Poems"; "In Explanation of Our Times"; and an introduction to poems.
- r. 3 **J-O**
Includes "Jazztet Muted" (from *Ask Your Mama*); "Junior Addict"; "Ku Klux"; "Labor Storm"; "Late Last Night"; "Layette"; "Let America be America Again"; "Little Dreams"; "Little Julie"; "Madame E La Terza Occasione"; "Madame to You"; "Mean Old Yesterday"; "Meeting Langston Hughes"; "Misery of Blackness"; "Miss Blues Child"; "Mississippi"; "Moscow and Me"; "Mother"; National Poetry Festival; "Negro"; "The Negro Mother" and reviews; "Night Funeral in Harlem"; "Night Owl"; "Nivel" (collection of poems in Spanish); "Note on Poetry"; "Office Building Evening"; "On a Christmas Night"; "On a Pallet of Straw"; and "On Your Retirement (for Russell and Rowena Jelliffe)".
- r. 3 **P**
- r. 3 "Penn Station"; "Poem for a Man (A. Philip Randolph on his 70th Birthday)"; and "Un Poeme Pour Jacques Roumain"
- r. 3 Poems translated into German by Jenheinz John
Includes "Jim Crow Car"; "Lynching Tree"; "African American Fragment"; "Brass Spittoons"; "Three of Harlem"; "Cabaret"; "Young Prostitute"; "Prayer Meeting"; "Poem"; "Shadows"; "Jazzonia"; "Young Singer"; "Last Feast of Belshazzar"; and "Winter Moon".
- r. 3 *Poems from Black Africa, edited by Langston Hughes*
Includes "In Air"; "Absent Lover"; "Trousers of Wind"; "O Lamb Give Me My Salt"; "Elephant"; "Love Song"; "To the Anxious Mother"; "Keep it Dark"; and "Paddling Song".
- r. 3 *Poems: Old and New*
Includes "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"; "African American Fragment"; "Mother to Son"; "Weary Blues"; "As Befits a Man"; "Little Green Tree Blues"; "Merry Go Round"; "Dear Lovely Death"; "Les Poetes Du Monde Defendent Le Peuple Espagnol"; "Soneto a Carmela Condon" by Federico Garcia Lorca; "A Song of Spain"; "Poetry of Christmas (Memories of Christmas)"; "Prelude to Our Age" (dedicated to the Schomburg Collection in honor of its 25th anniversary); and "Projection of a Day".
- R-T**
- r. 3 Individual poems
Includes "Readers Have Wonder"; "Roots"; "Rosa Parks"; "Salute Federation"; "Scottsboro Death Day (Poem for Charles Norris)"; "Scottsboro Limited" and reviews; "Selected Poems"; "Democracy"; "Africa"; "El Sepulcro de Lumumba"; "Spain to Alabama"; "Special Bulletin"; "Spirituals"; "Sunday Morning Where the Rhythm Flows, Daddy Grace, Effendi, Mother Horne"; and "Sweet and Sour Animal Book" (A B C Rhymes for Children).

Writing (cont.)
Poems (cont.)
R-T (cont.)

- r. 3 **"Syndicated War Poems"**
Includes "The Black Man Speaks"; "Blue Bayou"; "Crow Grows, Too"; "Fourth of July Thought"; "Freedom"; "Ghandi in Prison"; "Joe Louis"; "Red Crow"; "Unholy Tree"; "Tambourines"; "Three Poems"; "Drum"; "Snake"; "Request to Genius"; "Three Poems for Christmas"; "On a Christmas Night"; "On a Pallet of Straw"; and "Presents for the King".
- r. 3 ***Twelve Contemporary Negro Poets: U.S.A., selected by Langston Hughes for a B.B.C. radio anthology***
Includes Gwendolyn Brooks; James A. Emanuel; Helen Morgan Brooks; Sterling Brown; Arna Bontemps; Langston Hughes; Margaret Banner; Samuel Allen; Jay Wright; Mari Evans; Leroi Jones; and Oliver Pitcher.
- r. 3 ***Twelve Favorite Poems***
Includes "If We Must Die" by Claude McKay; "From the Dark Tower" by Countee Cullen; "A Black Man Talks of Reaping" by Arna Bontemps; "For Mary Mcleod Bethune" by Margaret Walker; "The Heart of a Woman" by Georgia Douglas Johnson; "Kitchinette Building" by Gwendolyn Brooks; "Aunt Jane Allen" by Fenton Johnson; "Morning Light the Dew Drier" by Effie Lee Newsome; "At the Carnival" by Anne Spencer; "Death of a Song" by Paul Laurence Dunbar; "My City" by James Weldon Johnson; and "Frederick Douglass" by Robert E. Hayden.
- r. 3 **"Twenty Eight Blues" by Langston Hughes**
As set to music by composers: W. C. Handy, "Golden Brown Blues"; Kurt Weill, "Marble and a Star"; Albert Hall, "Red Sun Blues"; Juanita Hall, "Lament Over Love"; Porter Granger, "Hootin' Owl Blues"; Lucille Goodloe, "Evenin' Air Blues"; Margaret Bond, "Just a No Good Man"; David Martin, "Good Advice Blues", "Five O'clock Blues", "Peacock Alley Blues", "Wee Small Hours", "Cool Saturday Night", "Miss Blues Child", "I'm a Good Old Girl", and "Did You Ever Hear the Blues?"; Sammy Hayward, "Heartache", "Mojo Blues", "Blues Lament", "Tired as I Can Be", "Got to Live Blues", and "Yesterday and Today"; and Herbert Kingsley, "Down and Out", "Lover's Return", "Hard Luck Blues", "Midwinter Blues", "Young Gal's Blues", "Little Old Letter", and "Lonesome Corner Blues".
- r. 3 **"Two Poems"**
Includes "Tomorrow's Seed"; "Hero, International Brigade"; "Two Way Street"; "To You"; "Us Colored"; and "Concerning Politicians".
- r. 3 **W-Y**
Includes "Weary Blues"; "What They Say" (Marion Palfi); "When I Go to Marry"; "Where Is the Jim Crow Section?"; "Where Service Is Needed"; "Without Benefit of Declaration"; "Words Like Freedom"; and "You've Taken My Blues and Gone".

Reviews

- r. 3 **A-P**
Includes reviews of Hughes's work: *An African Treasury*; *Best of Simple*; *Big Sea*; *Border Line*; *Book of the Negro*; *Dream Keeper*; *Drifting Liberals*; *First Book of the West Indies*; *Langston Hughes Reader*; *Laughing to Keep from Crying*; *Montage of a Dream Deferred*; *New Negro Poets: U.S.A.*; *Not Without Laughter*; *One Way Ticket*; and *Poetry of the Negro*.
- r. 3 **R-Z**
Includes reviews of: *Simple Takes a Wife*; *Rhythm*; *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*; *Shakespeare in Harlem*; *Simple Stories*; *Sweet Fly Paper of Life*; *Ways of White Folks*; and *Weary Blues*.
- r. 3 **Reviews by Hughes**
Includes his reviews of: *And Then We Heard the Thunder*; author's comments for Thomas Edward Francis on "When She Wears Red", "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", "Songs for a Banjo Dance", "Weary Blues", and "Early Evening Quarrel"; *The Book of Jazz*; *Blues People*; *These Comments Seem Good to Me*; and *A Jazz Lexicon*.

Short stories

- r. 3 **A-J**
Includes "African Morning"; "The Badger and the Hens" by Juan de la Cabada (translated by Langston Hughes); "Bed and Bed Bugs", translated by Langston Hughes; "Biography" by Rafael F. Munoz (translated by Langston Hughes); "Blessed Assurance"; "Cora Unashamed"; "Daddy Please"; "Dialogue at Dawn"; "Dr. Brown's Decision"; "Dog and a Cat Tale"; "Egypt on the Brain"; "Evening Air Blues"; "The Folks at Home"; "A Good Job Done"; "HAR YOU ACT"; "The Hero"; "Incident at Bokhara with Arthur Koestler"; and "Joy Brings Simple Down to Earth".

Writing (cont.)
Short stories (cont.)

- r. 3 **K-Z**
- Includes "The Killing Vacations"; "Langston Hughes' Harlem"; "Laughter in Madrid"; "Let's Get Together Week"; "Little Old Jack"; "Mary Winosky" (Hughes's first short story); "Muanga"; "My America"; "Negro American (Simple)"; "Poor Little Black Fellow"; "Reason and Right, a Simple Commentary"; "Reverend Mr. Lewis" by Luis Felipe Rodríguez (translated by Langston Hughes); "Saga of a Lonesome Night"; "Sailor Ashore"; "St. James: Sixty Years Young"; "Simple Again"; "Simple Commits a Faux Pas in Harlem English"; "Simple and the Moon"; "Simple Speaks His Mind" and reviews; "Simple Stakes a Claim" and reviews; "Simple Transformation"; "Statue and Statues"; "Simple Uncle Sam" and reviews; "Sister Johnson"; "Sixteen Short Stories"; "Slave on the Block"; "Songs of Christmas"; "Sorrow for a Midget"; "South of Light Blues and Pomegranates (An Appreciation)"; "Spanish Blood"; "Speak Well of the Dead"; "The Stair Decides"; "The Survivors" by Levi Marrero (translated by Langston Hughes); "Tamara Kanhum" (Soviet Asia's Greatest Dance); "Thank You for This"; "Thank You Ma'am"; "The Train that Took Wings and Flew"; "Tribute to Ralph Bunche"; and "With All Deliberate Speed".

- r. 3 **Songs**
- Includes "Alabama Earth" (poem by Hughes, music by Harold W. Stilson); "As I Go"; "The Hand Loved Best of All" (text for cantata by Hughes); "Let My People Go Now" (Adam Powell's 1944 campaign, lyrics by Hughes); "The Spring That Did Not Become Summer" (lyrics by Hughes, music by Lawrence Smith); "New World of Tomorrow" (lyrics by Hughes, music by Sammy Heyward); and translations.

- r. 3 **Miscellaneous**
- Includes first album of jazz.

Programs

This series consists of material relating to programs, activities, and events in which Langston Hughes participated or was the subject.

Arranged into six subseries: (1) Memorial tributes; (2) Personal appearances; (3) Radio broadcasts; (4) Recordings; (5) Speeches; and (6) Television broadcasts.

- r. 3 **Memorial tributes**
- Personal appearances**
- r. 3 **Schedule of lectures 1925-1963**
- r. 3 **1926-1939**
- r. 4 **1940-1949**
- r. 4 **1950-1959**
- r. 4 **1960-1963**
- r. 4 **1964-1965**
- r. 4 **undated**
- r. 4 **Radio broadcasts**
- r. 4 **Recordings 1945-1969**
- r. 4 **Speeches 1937-1966**
- r. 4 **Television broadcasts**

Works presented

This series contains material related to programs which included a presentation of Hughes's works. It is primarily composed of clippings, announcements, printed programs, leaflets, and other such records announcing or describing the programs.

Arranged into 3 subseries: (1) Plays; (2) Poems; and (3) Songs.

Works presented (cont.)

r. 4 **Plays**

Includes "Ballad of the Brown King" (dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr.); "The Colored Mother"; "Cool"; "Don't You Want to Be Free?"; "Emperor of Haiti"; "Five Foolish Virgins" (text by Hughes); "I Await the Day"; "Just a Little Simple"; "Just Around the Corner" (lyrics by Hughes); "A Part of the Blues" (A musical portrait of Langston Hughes); "Poetry in Modern Life"; "Roots"; "Samplings from Simple"; "Shakespeare in Harlem"; "Seven Moments of Love"; "Simply Heavenly"; "Soul Gone Home"; "Street Scene"; "Troubled Island"; and Vinnette Carroll (in a program of dramatic interpretations with scenes from Margaret Walker, Langston Hughes, Edgar Allen Poe, and others).

r. 4 **Poems**

Includes readings of the following works: Five Poems of Langston Hughes ("Lincoln Monument"; "Dressed Up"; "Ma Lord"; "Homesick Blues"; "Jazzonia"; and "The Glory Around His Head"); "National Poetry Festival"; Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee reading from Langston Hughes's "Little People" and "Rebellious People"; "Poeme d'Automne"; "Song Cycle" (Songs of the Season); "Two Songs on Works by Langston Hughes"; Voices Inc. ("Langston Hughes Reading His Works in a Spiritual Spectacular"); "Where Is the Jim Crow Section on the Merry Go Round"; WNYC American Music Festival Presenting Langston Hughes; "Stars" from "I Too Sing America"; "Three Dream Portraits" from the "Dream Keeper"; and "The Negro Speaks of Rivers".

r. 4 **Songs**

Includes "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel" (music by Lawrence Brown); "Esther" (libretto by Hughes); "Four Song" (text by Hughes); "Shake Four Brown Feet, Honey"; "Midnight Nan"; "The Crying Blues"; "Jazz Boys"; "The Glory Around His Head"; "Gospel Glow"; "Jazz Medley"; "Let Us Remember"; "Port Town"; St. James A.M.E. Church Men's Club setting of poems by Hughes; "Mother to Son"; "Songs to a Dark Virgin"; and "Death of an Old Sea Man".

Material in other libraries

This series contains information on sources of Hughes's material in other institutions across the country.

Arranged alphabetically by institution name.

r. 4 **Association for the Study of Negro Life and History**

r. 4 **Fisk University**

r. 4 **Kansas (University of)**

r. 4 **National Institute of Arts and Letters**

r. 4 **State University of New York at Buffalo**

r. 4 **Worcester Public Library, Worcester, MA**

r. 4 **Yale University**

r. 4 **Criticism**

This series is a very small file and contains a few, very general, criticisms of Hughes as a writer.

r. 4 **Miscellaneous**