



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

Guide to the

**Sidney Kaplan collection**

1971

Sc MG 137

## Summary

**Creator:** Kaplan, Sidney, 1913-

**Title:** Sidney Kaplan collection

**Date:** 1971

**Size:** 0.42 linear feet (1 box)

**Source:** Gift of Sidney Kaplan, 1985.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** This collection documents part of an exhibition on African American musicians organized by the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution. The papers consist of research material gathered by consultant Sidney Kaplan and his assistant, including sheet music; research notes; subject files of clippings and printed matter on various African American musicians; and correspondence with Alberta Hunter, Middleton Alexander "Spike" Harris, Caterina Jarboro, Noble Sissle, and several African American university museums and archives.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Sidney Kaplan collection, Sc MG 137, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Andre Elizee, January 1986.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

## Creator History

Sidney Kaplan was a scholar of African American culture and history. In World War II, he served as a first lieutenant in the United States Army in England. His experiences working with an all-Black unit in the segregated Army, coupled with his interest in Marxism, would influence his later career. In 1963,

Kaplan and an art gallery organized a seminal exhibit on portrayals of Blacks in American painting.

Kaplan taught at the University of Massachusetts (mostly at Amherst) for 31 years and helped found its African American Studies Department. He also helped create the University of Massachusetts Press; was a founder and the editor of *The Massachusetts Review*, a journal on the arts and public affairs; and edited the *Gehenna Press*, a journal on the fine arts. His books included *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution* (New York Graphic Society, 1973), written with his wife, Emma, and *American Studies in Black and White* (University of Massachusetts, 1991). He also worked as a consultant for the Public Broadcasting System series *The Civil War* and *Africans in America*. He died in 1993.

## **Scope and Content Note**

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## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

African American musicians  
African American singers  
African Americans -- History  
African Americans in the performing arts  
Museum exhibits

### **Names**

Harris, Middleton A. Spike  
Hunter, Alberta  
Jarboro, Caterina  
Kaplan, Sidney, 1913-  
Sissle, Noble, 1889-1975  
National Portrait Gallery (Smithsonian Institution)

## Container List

- b. 1 f. 1-2 Correspondence
- b. 1 f. 3 Research notes
- Subject files
- b. 1 f. 4 Singers (general)
- b. 1 f. 5 Burleigh, Harry T
- b. 1 f. 6 Calloway, Cab
- b. 1 f. 7 Coleridge-Taylor, Samuel
- b. 1 f. 8 Cook, Will Marion
- b. 1 f. 9 Dett, Nathaniel
- b. 1 f. 10 Dixon, Dean
- b. 1 f. 11 Ellington, Duke
- b. 1 f. 12 Fisk Jubilee Singers
- b. 1 f. 13 Europe, James Reese
- b. 1 f. 14 Handy, W. C
- b. 1 f. 15 Hayes, Roland
- b. 1 f. 16 Johnson, James P
- b. 1 f. 17 Morton, Ferdinand "Jelly Roll"
- b. 1 f. 18 Clippings and other printed matter