



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

Guide to the

Cheryl Clarke papers

1960-2005

Sc MG 642

Processed by Alexis Pauline Gumbs and Nora Soto, 2016.

Summary

Creator: Clarke, Cheryl, 1947-

Title: Cheryl Clarke papers

Date: 1960-2005

Size: 4.37 linear feet (11 boxes)

Source: Gift of Cheryl Clarke, 2005.

Abstract: Cheryl Clarke is a Black lesbian poet, writer, critic, scholar, and activist. This collection is a testament to her life's work as a Black, lesbian, feminist activist and demonstrates her commitment to promoting Black lesbian visibility and voices through writing as activism.

Preferred citation: [Item], Cheryl Clarke papers, Sc MG 642, 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: Processed by Alexis Pauline Gumbs and Nora Soto, 2016.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

Creator History

Cheryl Clarke is a Black lesbian poet, writer, critic, scholar, and activist. She was born on May 16, 1947, and raised in Washington, D.C. At the age of sixteen, she participated in the 1963 March on Washington with her parents. Clarke attended Howard University from 1965-1969, at the height of the Black Power Movement, and she became interested in studying the concept of Blackness. After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in English, she attended graduate school at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. In 1974, she obtained a Master of Arts in English from Rutgers University-New Brunswick, where she later earned a Master of Social Work in 1980, and a Doctorate degree in Literatures in English in 2000.

As an active member of the Rutgers community since 1969, Clarke worked as director of the Office of Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities on the New Brunswick Campus from 1992-2009. She subsequently served as Dean of Students for the Livingston Campus until her retirement in 2013. As a member of the graduate faculty of the Department of Women and Gender Studies, she taught courses on Black women writers, the Black Freedom Movement, and LGBT Black writers of the AIDS epidemic.

A prolific poet, essayist, and writer, Clarke is a central figure in the tradition of American Black lesbian poetry. She began writing poetry while studying at Howard University in the late 1960s, at the height of the Black Power and Black Arts Movements.

In 1977, she became a member of the Combahee River Collective, a Boston-based Black feminist lesbian organization, and attended their first Black feminist retreat in July 1977. Clarke later became involved with Kitchen Table: Woman of Color Press, a feminist press founded by Barbara Smith in 1980. Smith, a Black lesbian feminist writer and member of the Combahee River Collective, was inspired by her friend Audre Lorde to create a press that would publish the work of women of color. Clarke contributed "Lesbian: An Act of Resistance" to *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* in 1982, which was republished in a second edition by Kitchen Table in 1983. In her essay, Clarke asserted that lesbianism was a radical act of political resistance against a white supremacist, heterosexist, and patriarchal society.

In 1981, Clarke joined the Editorial Collective of *Conditions: A Feminist Magazine of Writing by Women with a Particular Emphasis on Writing by Lesbians*. *Conditions* was an annual literary journal founded in 1976 by Elly Bulkin, Jan Clausen, Irena Klepfisz, and Rima Shore that published the works of feminist and lesbian writers like Barbara Banks, Enid Dame, Audre Lorde, Chirlane McCray, Cherrie Moraga, Sapphire, and Shay Youngblood. During her time on the Editorial Collective, Clarke helped edit, proofread, and publish nine issues with the all-lesbian collective, which included Dorothy Allison, Jewelle Gomez, Carroll Oliver, Mirtha Quintanales, and Barbara Smith. Clarke served as a member of the Editorial Collective until 1990, when the magazine ceased publication.

In 1982, Clarke self-published her first book of poetry, *Narratives: Poems in the Tradition of Black Women*, which was republished the following year through Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. The poems in *Narratives* were staged as live performances from 1983 to 1985, by the Narratives Performing Company, a theatre company founded and directed by Clarke's sister, Breena Clarke, which included Linda Powell and Gwendolen Hardwick. Clarke's subsequent three poetry books, *Living as a Lesbian*, *Humid Pitch: Narrative Poetry*, and *Experimental Love*, were published by Firebrand Books, a feminist and lesbian publishing house established by Nancy K. Bereano in 1985. In 2006, Clarke released a collection of her works, *The Days of Good Looks: The Prose and Poetry of Cheryl Clarke, 1980-2005*.

In addition to her poetry, Clarke is a prominent literary critic who has reviewed the work of other Black, lesbian, and feminist women writers such as Alice Childress, Alexis De Veaux, Audre Lorde, Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, Cherry Muhanji, and Ann Petry. In 2004, she published *"After Mecca": Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement*, a critical monograph on the Black women writers of the Black Arts Movement based on her doctoral dissertation. Her essays, reviews, and articles have been published in journals such as *The Advocate*, *African American Review*, *Belles Lettres*, *The Black Scholar*, *Black Women's Fiction*, *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters*, *Gay Community News*, *Lambda Book Report*, *Sinister Wisdom*, and *Soujourner: The Women's Forum*.

Clarke's written work has been anthologized in *Black Like Us: A Century of African-American Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Fiction*, *Black Women's Blues: A Literary Anthology*, *Does Your Mama Know? An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories*, *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, *I Do/I Don't:*

Queers on Marriage, and This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color.

In addition to her writing career, Clarke has been an active member of many Black, lesbian, LGBT, and feminist organizations in New York and New Jersey. She has served on the boards of New York Women against Rape (NYWAR), a non-profit rape crisis organization; the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) at the CUNY Graduate Center; the New Jersey Women and AIDS Network; the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice; the Lesbian Health and Research Center Advisory Board; and the Newark Pride Alliance. As an activist, Clarke has helped organize and participate in various conferences, institutes, and events for Black, LGBT and feminist organizations such as the James Weldon Johnson Institute Working Group at Emory University and the Festival of Woman Writers.

Scope and Content Note

The Cheryl Clarke papers, 1969-2005, document Clarke's career as a poet, writer, critic and scholar who served as magazine editor, academic administrator, and public speaker. The collection is a testament to her life's work as a Black lesbian, feminist activist and demonstrates her commitment to promoting Black lesbian visibility and voices through writing as activism.

The collection consists largely of personal and professional correspondence and manuscripts, including drafts of her essays, articles, speeches, and poetry. The collection is organized into three series: Personal papers; Writing; and Professional papers.

Arrangement: The collection is organized into three series: (1) Personal papers; (2) Writing; and (3) Professional papers.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American women critics
African American women poets -- 20th century
Authors, Black
Gay rights -- United States
Lesbian activists
Women's rights -- United States

Names

Clarke, Cheryl, 1947-

Container List

Personal papers ca. 1974-2005

The Personal papers series contains a biographical file with resumes, bibliographies, and autobiographical statements, as well as article clippings about Clarke and her writings, speeches, and general professional work. The Correspondence subseries features personal and professional exchanges with prominent Black LGBT writers and activists such as Joseph Beam, Jewelle Gomez, Audre Lorde, and Barbara Smith, organized by correspondent, as well as a general collection of personal and professional correspondence.

The Collected materials subseries consists of print media from various Black, feminist, LGBT, and political publications and organizations, including journals, magazines, newspapers, and booklets. The subseries is organized by publication and organization chronologically. Of note are a promotional booklet for the African Arts Fund, an organization founded, in 1985, to assist South African artists, and poet Amiri Baraka's manifesto, "Afrikan Women Unite...to Struggle", presented at the Afrikan Women's Conference in 1974. Also included are funeral programs and a general file of organizational literature and clippings.

Arranged into two subseries: (1) Correspondence and (2) Collected materials.

- b. 1 f. 1 Biographical information
- b. 1 f. 2 Articles about Clarke 1984-2005
- Correspondence 1975-2004
 - b. 1 f. 3 Beam, Joseph 1985-1986
 - b. 1 f. 4 Dove, Rita 1988
 - b. 1 f. 5 Gomez, Jewelle 1988-2000
 - b. 1 f. 6 Jewell, Terri Lynn 1991
 - b. 1 f. 7 Jordan, June 1978
 - b. 1 f. 8 Lorde, Audre 1978-1992
 - b. 1 f. 9 Rich, Adrienne 1986-1999
 - b. 1 f. 10 Smith, Barbara 1975-1990
 - b. 1 f. 11 Family 1999-2004
 - b. 1 f. 12 Assata Shakur Defense Committee 1977-1979
 - b. 1 f. 13 General 1976-2004
- Collected materials 1975-1995
 - b. 1 f. 14 African Arts Fund 1986
 - b. 1 f. 15 Baraka, Amiri. "Afrikan Women Unite...to Struggle" 1974
 - b. 1 f. 16 *Belle Lettres* 1986-1989
 - b. 1 f. 17 *Encore Magazine* 1975
 - b. 1 f. 18 *Gay Community News* 1989-1995
 - b. 1 f. 19 *Majority Report* 1975
 - b. 1 f. 20 *Rafiki* 1976
 - b. 1 f. 21 *The Black Scholar* 1987
 - b. 1 f. 22 *The Nation* 1991
 - b. 1 f. 23 *Tribad: A Lesbian Separatist News Journal* 1977
 - b. 1 f. 24 Funeral programs
 - b. 1 f. 25 Miscellaneous

Writing 1969-2005

The Writing series comprises the bulk of the collection. This series contains drafts, professional correspondence, and clippings of Clarke's written work, including her poetry, articles, essays, scholarly reviews, and speeches, as well as the organizational records of *Conditions* Magazine.

The Early works subseries features a typescript copy of "The Life and Times of Assata Shakur, 1973-1977", written for the New Brunswick Committee for the Defense of Assata; an annotated typescript draft of the essay "Women, Blacks, Gays...the WAR Goes on...", and correspondence with the editor of *Chrysalis: A Magazine of Women's Culture*.

The Published works subseries, includes manuscripts, drafts, correspondence, reviews, and clippings related to her four books of poetry, *Narratives: Poems in the Tradition of Black Women* (1982), *Living as a Lesbian* (1986), *Humid Pitch: Narrative Poetry* (1989) and *Experimental Love* (1993), as well as her book of criticism, "After Mecca": *Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement* (2005), and her collected works, *The Days of Good Looks: The Prose and Poetry of Cheryl Clarke, 1980-2005* (2006). Additionally, there is a file for general poetry manuscripts.

The Articles and essays subseries contains twenty-seven published articles and essays, organized chronologically by date, which include drafts, correspondence, and clippings. The work focuses on Black, feminist, and LGBT themes, tackling racism, sexism and homophobia. There is also a general essay file.

The Reviews subseries consists of Clarke's scholarly book reviews and literary criticism essays of academic and creative works by other Black, lesbian, and feminist writers, such as Alice Childress, Alexis De Veaux, Audre Lorde, Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, Cherry Muhanji, and Ann Petry. This subseries features drafts, manuscripts, clippings, and correspondence organized chronologically by publication date.

The Anthologies subseries features drafts and manuscripts of anthologized essays, poems, and stories as well as related correspondence and clippings organized chronologically by publication date.

The Speeches subseries contains annotated drafts and published excerpts of speeches for various conferences, talks, and events held at institutions such as the City University of New York (CUNY), Bates College, the Henrik-Martin Institute, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Frequent topics include the Black lesbian identity, anti-Black racism, LGBT issues, feminism, activism, and academia. This subseries is organized chronologically by date and also features related correspondence.

The Dissertation subseries includes annotated drafts and a final version of her doctorate thesis, "After Mecca": The Impact of Black Women on Black Poetry after 1965", as well as degree candidacy forms and correspondence for the Graduate School-New Brunswick at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

The Unpublished works subseries features material for the Black Women Writers Project with Evelyn Hammond, such as interviews and correspondence with Black female writers like Becky Birtha, Carol Olivia Herron, and Barbara Smith. In addition to *Balancing the Egg: A Lesbian Conversation*, a conversational essay anthology coedited with Elizabeth Walber, the subseries contains three unpublished short stories, miscellaneous drafts, research material, and rejection notices, organized chronologically by date.

The *Conditions* subseries consists of the editorial, financial, contractual, and publishing records of *Conditions: A Magazine of Writing by Women with an Emphasis on Writing by Lesbians*. Clarke served as part of the magazine's Editorial Collective from 1981 to 1990. This subseries also contains office files that include correspondence with staff, contributors, and subscribers; meeting minutes; printed material; and a photocopy of the journal, as well as grant funding applications and subscriptions.

Arranged into nine subseries: (1) Early works; (2) Published works; (3) Articles and essays; (4) Reviews; (5) Anthologies; (6) Speeches; (7) Dissertation; (8) Unpublished works; and (9) Conditions.

b. 2 f. 1 Early works ca. 1977-1978

Published works ca. 1982-2005

Books

Writing (cont.)

Published works (cont.)

Books (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 2-3 *Narratives: Poems in the Tradition of Black Women* 1982-1994
Includes correspondence and reviews.
- b. 2 f. 4-6 *Living as a Lesbian* 1984-1987
Includes drafts, correspondence, and reviews.
- b. 2 f. 7-9 *Humid Pitch: Narrative Poetry* 1987-1992
Includes drafts, correspondence, and reviews.
- b. 2 f. 10-11 *Experimental Love* 1987-1994
Includes drafts and correspondence.

Poetry

- b. 3 f. 1 Accepted for publication
- b. 3 f. 2 General
- b. 3 f. 3-4 *"After Mecca": Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement* 2004-2005
Includes correspondence and reviews.
- b. 3 f. 5 *The Days of Good Looks: The Prose and Poetry of Cheryl Clarke, 1980-2005* 2002-2005
Includes correspondence.
- b. 3 f. 6 *Corridors of Nostalgia: Poetry by Cheryl Clarke* 1998-2005
Includes correspondence.

Articles and essays ca. 1981-2005

- b. 3 f. 7 "The Failure to Transform: Homophobia in the Black Community" 1981-2003
- b. 3 f. 8 "New Notes on Lesbianism" 1983-1995
- b. 3 f. 9 "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance" 1986-1996
- b. 3 f. 10 "She Still Wrote out the Word Kotex on a Torn Piece of Paper Wrapped up in a Dollar Bill..." 1986-1988
- b. 3 f. 11 "The Space in Me where Baldwin Lives" 1987
- b. 3 f. 12 "Saying the Least Said, Telling the Least Told: The Voices of Black Lesbian Writers" 1989-1990
- b. 3 f. 13 "Silence and Invisibility" 1989
- b. 3 f. 14 "Women's Work" 1989-1990
- b. 3 f. 15 "Knowing the Danger and Going There Anyway" 1990
- b. 3 f. 16 *"Summer Reading", Lambda Book Report* 1990
- b. 3 f. 17 "Sometimes Silence Is Worse Than Death" draft 1990
- b. 3 f. 18 "The Homoerotic Other" drafts 1990
- b. 3 f. 19 "The Everyday Life of Lesbian Sexuality" 1990-1991
- b. 3 f. 20 "The Body as Taboo" draft 1991
- b. 3 f. 21 "The Cockeyed Painting" draft 1991
- b. 3 f. 22 "Queer Theory" 1992
- b. 3 f. 23 "Living the Texts Out" 1992-1993
- b. 3 f. 24 "'Out' Outside the Classroom" 1993
- b. 4 f. 1 "1995 Like 1992 Like 1989 Will Mark Me Forever" 1996
- b. 4 f. 2 "The Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture" 1996-1997
- b. 4 f. 3 "African-American Literature" 1997
- b. 4 f. 4 "Goatchild and Cowboy: Pat Parker as Queer Trickster" 1998
- b. 4 f. 5 "Poetry, Pedagogy, and the Public" 1998

Writing (cont.)

Articles and essays (cont.)

- b. 4 f. 6 "Lesbianism 2000" 1999-2002
- b. 4 f. 7 "Creating a More Inclusive Campus" draft 2001
- b. 4 f. 8 "Black for 31 Years: Nuances" 2001
- b. 4 f. 9 "The Prong of Permanency: A Rant" 2004
- b. 4 f. 10 General essays 1987-2005
- Reviews ca. 1986-2002
- b. 4 f. 11 *DeVeaux, Alexis. Blue Heat: A Portfolio of Poems and Drawings* 1986
- b. 4 f. 12 *"Diaspora of Consciousness: The Novels of Paule Marshall", Sinister Wisdom* 1986
- b. 4 f. 13 *Marshall, Jane. Mythic Black Fiction, in The Black Scholar* 1987
- b. 4 f. 14 *Burford, Barbara. The Threshing Floor, in Gay Community News* 1987
- b. 4 f. 15 *Washington, Mary Helen. Invented Lives: Narratives of Black Women, 1860-1960, in Belles Lettres* 1987-1988
- b. 4 f. 16 *Melhem, D. H. Gwendolyn Brooks: Poetry and the Heroic Voice and Mootry, Maria K. and Gary Smith. A Life Distilled: Gwendolyn Brooks, in Callaloo* 1987-1988
- b. 4 f. 17 *Scott, Kesho, Cherry Muhanji and Egyirba High. Tight Spaces, in Sojourner: The Women's Forum* 1988
- b. 4 f. 18 *"Notes on Beloved"* 1988
- b. 4 f. 19 *"Race, Homosocial Desire, and 'Mammon' in Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man"* 1988-2002
- b. 4 f. 20 *Lorde, Audre. A Burst of Light* 1988-1990
- b. 4 f. 21 *Muhanji, Cherry. Her, in Belles Lettres* 1989-1991
- b. 4 f. 22 *Pharr, Suzanne. Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism, in Sojourner: The Women's Forum*
- b. 4 f. 23 *Petry, Ann. Miss Muriel and Other Stories, in Belles Lettres* 1989
- b. 4 f. 24 *Anzaldua, Gloria. Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color, in Bridges* 1990
- b. 4 f. 25 *Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith. All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave, in Sinister Wisdom* 1991
- b. 4 f. 26 *Lee, Spike. Malcolm X* 1992
- b. 4 f. 27 *Lorde, Audre. The Marvelous Arithmetics of Distance: Poems* 1987-1992 1994
- b. 4 f. 28 *Rich, Adrienne. What Is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics* 1994
- b. 4 f. 29 *Collins, Patricia Hill. Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice, in African American Review* 1999
- b. 5 f. 1 *Wade-Gayles, Gloria. No Crystal Stair: Visions of Race and Sex in Black Women's Fiction*
- b. 5 f. 2 *Childress, Alice. A Short Walk in New Women's Times*

Writing (cont.)
Reviews (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 3-4 **Various reviews 1984-1988**
Includes reviews of Brenda Marie Osbey's *Ceremonies for Minneconjoux*; Pat Mora's *Chants*; Dionne Brand's *Winter Epigrams and Chronicles of the Hostile Sun*; Dorothy Love's *A Voice Sometimes Sane*; Charlotte Bunch's *Passionate Politics: Feminist Theory in Action*; "Endorsement for Other Countries"; Maureen Seaton's *Fear of Subways*; Carlos A. Rodriguez-Matos's *POESIdA*; and Fahamisha Patricia Brown's *On Black Poetry: A Vernacular Poetry*.

Anthologies ca. 1984-2005

- b. 5 f. 5 *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* 1984-2005
b. 5 f. 6 *Bluestones and Salt Hay: An Anthology of Contemporary New Jersey Poets* 1988-1990
b. 5 f. 7 *Black Women's Blues: A Literary Anthology* 1989-1991
b. 5 f. 8 *Does Your Mama Know? An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories* 1995-1996
b. 5 f. 9 *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks and Gays Fighting for Equality* 1998-1999
b. 5 f. 10 *The World in Us: Lesbian and Gay Poetry of the Next Wave* 1999-2000
b. 5 f. 11 *Black Like Us: A Century of African-American Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Fiction* 2000-2001

General

- b. 5 f. 12 1985-1989
b. 5 f. 13 1990-1996
b. 5 f. 14 1997-2004

Speeches ca. 1976-2003

- b. 5 f. 15 "The Autonomy of Lesbian Women", Toward a Strategy for the Lesbian Movement, draft 1976
b. 5 f. 16 "Gay Pride Speech", New York City 1986 June
b. 5 f. 17 "Black Women's Identity", Women Job Center in New Brunswick, draft 1987
b. 5 f. 18 "Gay and Lesbian Lives in Academe: Toward a Better Campus Climate", American Association of Higher Education, drafts 1991
b. 5 f. 19 "Joan Nestle and the Activist Community", The City University of New York (CUNY) 1992
b. 5 f. 20 "Read Democracy", Bates College 1992
b. 5 f. 21 "Women in the Nineties: Changing Feminism at the Fin de Siècle", Institute for Research on Women 1992-1993
b. 5 f. 22 "Rethinking Lesbianism" draft 1992
b. 5 f. 23 "Volunteers Speak", Henrik-Martin Institute 1993
b. 5 f. 24 "Making Sisterhood Powerful" draft 1995
b. 5 f. 25 "Lesbian Genders", Whitney Museum of American Art 1996
b. 5 f. 26 **General 1990-2003**

Dissertation ca. 1995-2003

- b. 6 f. 1 **Drafts 1997-2000**
b. 6 f. 2 **Candidacy forms and correspondence 1995-2003**

Unpublished works 1969-1996

- b. 6 f. 3-4 **The Black Women Writers Project with Evelyn Hammonds 1983-1984**
b. 6 f. 5-6 **"Balancing the Egg: A Lesbian Conversation" 1989-1991**
Includes draft and correspondence.

Writing (cont.)

Unpublished works (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 7-9 **Short stories 1987-1996**
Includes "Flint"; draft of "The Weavers: A Children's Story"; and draft of "A Slave's Sacred Supper".
- b. 6 f. 10-11 **Drafts 1969-1990**
- b. 6 f. 12 **Research 1976-1998**
- b. 6 f. 13 **Rejections**
- Conditions* ca. 1983-1994**
- b. 7 f. 1 **Biographical information**
- b. 7 f. 2-5 **Correspondence 1986-1990**
- b. 7 f. 6 **Editorial notes 1983-1989**
- b. 7 f. 7 **Minutes 1985-1989**
- b. 7 f. 8 **General office**
- b. 7 f. 9 **Printed matter**
- b. 7 f. 10 **Photocopy of journal**
- Financial**
- b. 7 f. 11 **Amended business certificates**
- b. 7 f. 12 **Banta Publishers**
- b. 7 f. 13-15 **Bank statements 1987-1994**
- b. 7 f. 16 **Cash receipts 1987**
- b. 7 f. 17-18 **Cancelled checks 1987-1992**
- b. 8 f. 1 **Cash disbursement ledger 1988-1990**
- b. 8 f. 2 **Distribution contracts**
- b. 8 f. 3-12 **Paid bills 1986-1989**
- b. 8 f. 13 **Tax information 1988-1992**
- b. 8 f. 14-21 **Grants**
Includes grants from Astraea, Chicago Resource Center, Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines, Holding Our Own, National Community Funds, New York State Council on the Arts, and Open Meadows Foundation. Also includes general information.
- Subscriptions**
- b. 9 f. 1 **1987-1988**
- b. 9 f. 2 **Dawson, France**
- b. 9 f. 3-5 **Institutions**
- b. 9 f. 6 **General**
- Legal**
- b. 9 f. 7 **Charities registration**
- b. 9 f. 8 **Pearson, Laurence H., Attorney**

Professional papers ca. 1977-2005

The Professional series documents Clarke's involvement with various LGBT and feminist organizations, including the ASTRAEA National Lesbian Action Foundation, the CUNY Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS), the Geraldine Dodge Foundation's Poetry Festival, and New York Women Against Rape. She was an active member of these organizations and her contributions are represented by the correspondence, planning materials, and programs in the Organizations subseries. The Conferences and Events subseries contains material related to Clarke's participation in Black feminist organizations and writers' conferences, and include handwritten notes, correspondence, meeting minutes, programs, and promotional material for Black Feminist Retreats, Black Women Writer's Today, OutWrite, the Womyn of Color Forum, the NYC Celebration of Queer Culture, and Fire and Ink. Of note are a typewritten copy of Audre Lorde's "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action", delivered at the Modern Language Association's "Lesbian and Literature Panel" in 1977, as well as Clarke's Audre Lorde Memorial Lecture at the 1996 OutWrite Conference. The series also includes files from her administrative career at Rutgers University; correspondence with her publisher, Nancy Bereano of Firebrand Books, other editors and publishers; and various letters of commendation and invitations to events.

Arranged into two subseries: (1) Organizations and (2) Conferences and Events.

Organizations

- b. 9 f. 9 New York Women Against Rape 1983-1988
- b. 9 f. 10 Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation 1988-2002
- b. 9 f. 11 Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) 1989-2004
- b. 9 f. 12 ASTRAEA National Lesbian Action Foundation 1993-2005
- b. 9 f. 13 General 1985-2002

Conferences and events

- b. 10 f. 1-2 Black Feminist Retreats 1977-1978
- b. 10 f. 3 OutWrite 1990-1996
- b. 10 f. 4 1st Annual Audre Lorde Legacy Award Celebration 1996
- b. 10 f. 5 Fire and Ink: A Writer's Festival 2002-2004

General

- b. 10 f. 6 1978-1992
- b. 10 f. 7 1993-1998
- b. 10 f. 8 1999-2002
- b. 10 f. 9 2003-2005
- b. 11 f. 1 Rutgers University 1984-2004

Correspondence

- b. 11 f. 2 Bereano, Nancy, Firebrand Books 1984-2002

General

- b. 11 f. 3 1984-1989
- b. 11 f. 4 1990-1993
- b. 11 f. 5 1994-1998
- b. 11 f. 6 1999-2005