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## The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes by Carl Van Vechten

Jaclynn Martin

Sloan Senegal

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# The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes by Carl Van Vechten

## Collection P142

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English

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Moorland-Spingarn Research Center

500 Howard Place NW

Washington, DC 20059

Business Number: 202-806-7480

URL: <http://dh.howard.edu/msrc/>

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
<b>Creator:</b>	Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964
<b>Title:</b>	The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes by Carl Van Vechten
<b>ID:</b>	P142
<b>ID [aspace_uri]:</b>	/repositories/2/resources/515
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1931-1964
<b>Physical Description:</b>	21 Boxes
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6.5 Linear feet
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	.

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## Biographical Information

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### Biographical Chronology

Carl Van Vechten, 1880-1964	
1880 June 17	Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
1899-1903	Attended the University of Chicago, majoring in English.
1903-1905	Worked for the Chicago American Newspaper.
1906	Worked as an assistant music critic for the New York Times Newspaper.

The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes by Carl Van Vechten

1907	Married Anna Elizabeth Snyder; took his first trip to Europe.
1908-1909	Worked as a Paris Correspondent for the New York Times Newspaper.
1910	Contributed music biographies to the Century Dictionary.
1912	Divorces Anna Elizabeth Snyder Van Vechten.
1913	Worked as a drama critic for the New York Times Newspaper.
1914	Married actress Fania Marinoff; took his second trip to Europe.
1914-1932	Worked as an independent writer and novelist.
1932	Began serious work in photography.
1935	Mounted his first photographic show.
1941	Founded the Carl Van Vechten Collection of Books and Manuscripts in the New York Public Library as well as the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters as Yale University Library.
1942-1945	Served in the American Theatre Wing during World War II.
1944	Founded the George Gershwin Memorial Collection of Music and Musical Literature at Fisk University Library.
1946	Founded the Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes at Howard University Library. (Currently housed in the Prints and

	Photographs Department of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.)
1947	Founded Anna Marble Pollock Memorial Library of Books about Cats at Yale University Library.
1949	Founded the Florine Stettheimer Memorial Collection of Books about the Fine Arts at Fisk University Library.
1954	The Jerome Bowers Peterson Collection of Photographs by Carl Van Vechten of Celebrated Negroes presented by Dorothy Peterson to the University of Mexico.
1955	Received an honorary Ph.D. from Fisk University. Fragments from an unwritten auto-biography published by Yale. Carl Van Vechten, A Biography published by A. A. Knopf Publishers. Honored on his seventy-fifth birthday by exhibitions at Yale University and at the New York Public Library.
1960	Honored as a chief benefactor by the New York Public Library. Honored on his eightieth birthday by exhibition at Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) and the University of Pittsburgh.
1961	Became a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.
1964	Dies in New York City.
1966 June 17	Ashes were scattered in Shakespeare Garden, Central Park.

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## Scope and Contents

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"The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes by Carl Van Vechten" was a gift presented to the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center by Carl Van Vechten in various installments starting with the first in 1946 and ending up until his death in 1964. Carl Van Vechten was an author, critic, photographer, bibliophile, and philanthropist. During his time as a photographer, he photographed many prominent African Americans of the time, including some of the most important figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes by Carl Van Vechten Collection is comprised of 673 images taken between 1931 and 1964 by Van Vechten. The collection focuses mainly on African Americans in the arts including actors, dancers, musicians, authors, architects, artists, and miscellaneous Black performers. Present are also some images of Black athletes. Some collection includes images of Rose McClendon, Langston Hughes, Josephine Baker, Alain Locke, Romare Bearden, Ethel Waters, Ella Fitzgerald, Rudolph Dunbar, W.E.B DuBois, and many others. Although the majority of these images are single portraits, others contain group portraits of individuals, some including Van Vechten himself.

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## Arrangement

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This collection is arranged alphabetically by the last name of the subject being photographed. The last series within this collection is comprised of group photographs taken.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Moorland-Spingarn Research Center

500 Howard Place NW

Washington, DC 20059

Business Number: 202-806-7480

URL: <http://dh.howard.edu/msrc/>

## Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use.

## Conditions Governing Access

**Legal Status:** From a letter to Mrs. Porter from Carl Van Vechten dated December 2nd, 1946 regarding conditions of the gift (173 photographs): 1. They are to be files or exhibited by themselves and not mixed with other photographs. 2. When exhibited, they are to be shown under glass or covered with cellophane. They may be shown in temporary frames or in a showcase or with a cellophane covering, but their survival demands this protection. 3. They are not to be loaned without my (Carl Van Vechten) permission and when they are loaned, the above conditions are to be strictly observed. 4. They may not be reproduced without my (Carl Van Vechten) permission. 5. Nothing is to be written or stamped on the front of these pictures. 6. If you hold an exhibition of these photographs or there is any publicity regarding them, I (Carl Van Vechten) hope you will keep me (Carl Van Vechten) informed. From a letter to Mrs. Porter from Carl Van Vechten dated Spetmber 22nd, 1953 regarding conditions: "For a long time I have been intending to write you to inform you that, in case of my death, you are released from the restriction in regard to reproduction of my photographs. I.e. in case of my death, you need not to refer to my heirs for permission to reproduce them, but may give this permission, you, or whoever has charge of them at that period, yourself, using of course a certain amount of discretion." Letter to Donna Wells, April 12th, 1994 from Bruce Kellner regarding rights and use instructions: "The institutions own the photographs but not the rights to their reproduction. By his Will, Van Vechten specified that any royalties or fees realized from his work after his death be donated to "The James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters" which he established in 1941 at Yale University. All requests to reproduce Van Vechten's photographs should be directed in writing to Mr. Solomon." Joseph Solomon of Gallet Dreyer & Berkey, represents the Estate of Carl Van Vechten. (Joseph Solomon, deceased October 8th, 1996. Bruce Kellner, deceased February 16, 2019.) Library of Congress believes that the photographs are in the public domain. Written permission from the Carl Van Vechten Trust is required to reproduce or publish Carl Van Vechten photographs in any way: Edward M. Burns The Carl Van Vechten Trust 70 East 10th Street #6Gt New York, NY 10003 [vanvechtentrust@gmail.com](mailto:vanvechtentrust@gmail.com)

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Harlem Renaissance
- black-and-white photographs

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## Bibliography to Biography

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*Carl Van Vechten* by Edward Lueders.

*Carl Van Vechten and the Irreverent Years* by Brice Kellner.

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## Collection Inventory

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## Series D: D's

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