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OWEN VINCENT DODSON PAPERS
Collection 27-1 to 27-10

Prepared & Revised by:
Greta S. Wilson
June 1980

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

Scope Note

Owen Dodson presented this collection to Howard University between the years 1963-1968. It consists of scripts of certain of his plays, two novels, reviews and programs of his publications and productions, a small amount of personal correspondence, lectures and workshop materials, sheet music, poetry, periodicals containing Dodson's contributions, clippings, prints, photographs and two scrapbooks. Among the photographs, a large array of pictures of Lillian Evanti, (Lillian Evans Tibbs) coloratura soprano from Washington, D.C., are dominant. Many of these photographs were taken in elaborate costumes from some of her performances.

The collection contains approximately 1080 items and measures 5 linear feet including two individually wrapped scrapbooks. It spans the years 1930 to 1968.

Biographical Data

- 1914 Born in Brooklyn, New York, the son of Sarah Elizabeth Goode and Nathaniel Barnett Dodson
- 1932 Graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn
- 1936 B.A. degree from Bates College, Lewiston, Maine; elected to Phi Beta Kappa
- 1938, 1939 Received fellowships from General Education Board
- 1938-1942 Directed drama at Atlanta University and Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia
- 1939 Master of Fine Arts, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut
- 1940 Won Anderson Award for Verse Drama for his Garden of Time
- 1941 Won contest sponsored by the Committee on Interracial Cooperation, Atlanta, Georgia, for his Gargoyles in Florida
- 1942 Directed drama at Hampton Institute, Hampton, VA.
- 1942-43 Served in U.S. Navy (Seaman I/C) during which time he directed a morale building program and wrote several verse dramas
- 1944 Awarded Rosenwald Foundation Fellowship
- 1946 His Powerful Long Ladder, a book of poems was published
- 1947 Appointed Associate Professor of the Department of Drama, College of Fine Arts, Howard University
- 1949 Under the auspices of the Department of State toured Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Germany with his Howard University Players
- 1951 *His Boy at the Window*, a novel, was published
- 1953 Awarded Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship "for creative activity in the field of fiction."
- 1955 Won prize in international short story contest sponsored by Paris Revue for The Summer Fire
- 1960 Promoted to full Professor, Department of Drama, College of Fine Arts, Howard University

Biographical Data

- 1963 Toured the United States with his Howard University Players
- 1964 Named member of National Committee of the Shakespeare Anniversary Committee plan the American celebration of the Shakespeare Quadricentennial
- 1967 Received Doctor of Letters degree from Bates College

Mr. Dodson's plays have been performed by theatre groups throughout this country and in England. His poems, plays and fiction have been translated into French, Polish, Italian, Japanese and Norwegian.

Series Description

- Series A**
Box 27-1
Personal Papers
Awards, certificates, diplomas, clippings, legal documents, programs, announcements and invitations surrounding his academic and professional career
- Series B**
Box 27-1
Correspondence
Letters, telegrams, greeting and post cards
- Series C**
Box 27-2
to Box 27-3
Manuscripts
Includes scripts, cast list, notes, property lists, sheet music, two novels "A Bent House" and "Boy and the Window", poems and plays written by Dodson
- Series D**
Box 27-4
Programs and Reviews of Production
Newspaper reviews, posters, flyers, programs relating to theatrical productions mostly directed by Dodson; some performed by the Howard Players and others. Includes reviews by Dodson.
- Series E**
Box 27-5
Teaching Materials
Notes and outlines from a production seminar and manuscripts from a play writing class.
- Series F**
Box 27-5
Programs
Programs of Charter Day exercises, Howard University commencement exercises, church services, recitals, operas, and plays
- Series G**
Box 27-5
Publications
Includes periodicals containing articles contributed by Dodson; and descriptions of two anthologies; American Negro Poetry and Soon, One Morning which contains contributions by Dodson
- Series**
Box 27-6
Howard Players
Background of the Howard Players, Howard University and the Drama Department plus review of plays performed by the Players

Series Description continued

Series I Howard University

Box 27-6 Annual report of the Summer School, 1951

Series J Theatre Workshops

Box 27-6 Clippings, programs, reviews, proceedings invitations to productions of the following workshops: New York State Theatre Festival, Alabama, A & M College Writers Conference, Atlanta University Summer School of the Theatre, Hampton Institute Summer Theatre Arts Festival

Series K Prints and Photographs

Box 27-7 Includes several photographs of Dodson. There are a large number of photos of Miss
to Box 27-8 Lillian Evanti (Lillian Evans Tibbs), soprano from Washington, D.C., many of which are of her in ornate costumes from some of her performances. There are also numerous prints of scenes from famous plays and operas.

Series L Scrapbooks

Item 27-9 The first Scrapbook contains clippings of the cartoon series "Dark Laughter" and
to Item 27-10 "Lighter Side" by Ol Harrington: the second one contains clippings surrounding his professional career as director and author.

Container List

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Series A | Personal Papers |
| | Academic |
| Box | Folder |
| 27-1 | 1 Bates College |
| | 2 High School Diploma and Completion of study, 1929, 1932 |
| | 3 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation |
| | |
| | Awards |
| | 4 Awards |
| | |
| | Clippings |
| | 5 Biographical materials - clipping |
| | 6 Clippings - miscellaneous |
| | 7 Jefferson City Post Tribune |
| | |
| | Documents |
| | 8 Agreement: Farrar, Straus and Co. and Owen Dodson |
| | 9 Appointment as Apprentice Petty Officer, U.S. Navy |
| | 10 Certification of Registration of a Claim to Copyright in a Drama- tic or a Dramatic Musical Composition |
| | |
| | Organizational Affiliations |
| | 11 Harold Jackson Memorial Committee - clippings and snapshots |
| | 12 Phi Beta Kappa, Gamma Chapter |
| | 13 Shakespeare Anniversary Committee - clippings |
| | 14 Shakespeare Anniversary Committee - correspondence |
| | |
| | 15 Thomas Jefferson High School Alumni Association - Alumni Reunion Programs |
| | |
| | Printed Materials |
| | 16 Announcements |

- 17 Contest Programs
- 18 Invitations
- 19 Ship passenger lists
- 20 Published materials

B Correspondence

- Letters
- Box 27-1 Folder 21 Correspondence - A-B
22 Correspondence - C-F
23 Correspondence - G-H
24 Correspondence - J-N
25 Correspondence - P-S
26 Correspondence - V-N
27 Correspondence - no name
and/or date
28 Other Correspondents
- Cards
- 29 Greeting cards
30 Post cards
- Telegrams
- 31 Telegrams

C Manuscripts

- Box 27-2 Music
- 32 "Naturama" by Evanti, Lillian
33 "Til Victory is Won" - Cast
List, property list, etc.
34 "Til Victory is Won" -
miscellaneous, notes,
memos, etc.
35 "Til Victory is Won" - script
- Music Scores
- 36 "Everybody Join Hands"
37 "He's Hitched Our Wagon to a
Star"
38 "My Lord's Treasury"
39 "Sleep, Darling Sleep"
40 "We Will follow all the Way"
41 "When we were Lost"
42 Untitled scores
- Novels
- 43 A Bent House

44 Boy at the Window

Poems

45 "Asking"

46 "Autumn"

47 "Black Mother Praying"

C Manuscripts (cont'd)

| | Poems |
|----------|--|
| Box 27-2 | Folder 48 Black mother -Praying in the summer, 1943 |
| | 49 "Centaur's are half Animal, half men" |
| | 50 "The Confession Stone" |
| | 51 "The Decision" |
| | 52 "Finally, Lady, You Were Gone From Us" |
| | 53 "Guita" |
| | 54 "Ira Aldridge, 1807-1867" draft |
| | 55 "Jonathan's Song" |
| | 56 "Metaphor for a Negro Woman" |
| | 57 "Poems for Kenneth" |
| | 58 "The Precedent" |
| | 59 "Righteousness" |
| | 60 "Sickle Pears" |
| | 61 "Someday We're Gonna Tear The Pillars Down" |
| | 62 "Summing Up by the Defendant" |
| | 63 "Tell Rachael, He Whispered" |
| | 64 "This is a Prayer" |
| | 65 "Those Seven Sisters" |
| | 66 "Trilogy Earle Hyman" |
| | 67 "The Widows Walk" |
| | 68 "For J.M." |
| | 69 "Doomsday Chorus" |
| | 70 "I Will Tremble Once and Be Forgotten Forever" |
| | 71 "Winter Death" |
| | 72 "All for fun of the World Well Gained" |
| | 73 "Venus and Mars" |
| | 74 "Troy is a lost City" |
| | 75 "The Dawn Risers" |
| | 76 "Slave Who Died Coming Here" |
| | 77 "On Her Birthday" |
| | 78 "Epithalamion" |
| | 79 "France 1942" |
| | 80 "Dante, 1942" |
| | 81 "The Failure" |
| | 82 "Seventy-five Years Is A Long Stretch of Land" |

83 "Generation of Vipers"

84 "Returning Veteran"

C Manuscripts (cont'd)

- Box 27-3
- Poems
- Folder 85 "Cradle Song"
- 86 "To the Intolerant"
- 87 Christmas Poems
- 88 Untitled Poems
- Short Stories
- 89 "Come Home Early, Chile"
- 90 "The Sea Shell"
- Miscellaneous
- 91 "Bury Me Over My Father"
- 92 Notes for a Ballard
- Plays
- 93 "Amistad"
- 94 "Bayou Legend" - Script
- 95 "Bayou Legend - Script -
Copyrighted, 1946
- 96 "Bayou Legend - Script -
presented by the Theatre
Workshops of Hunter College
May 13-21, 1950
- 97 "Where You From?" A
manuscript of the play

D Programs and Reviews of
Production

- Box 27-4
- 98 "Antigone"
- 99 "Aria da Cappello"
- 100 "The Bad Seed"

- 101 "The Amen Corner", James
Baldwin
- 102 "Bayou Legend"
- 103 "Beyond the Blues"
- 104 "Boy at the Window"
- 105 "The Cave Dwellers"
- 106 "The Cherry Orchard"

- 107 "A Christmas Miracle" -
clippings
- 108 "A Christmas Miracle -
programs
- 109 "The Confession Stone"
- 110 "Constellation of Women"
- 111 "Death of a Salesman"
- 112 "Defiant Island"
- 113 "Divine Comedy"
- 114 "A Dream Come True in White
and Blue"

D Programs and Reviews of
Production

| | | |
|----------|--------|--|
| Box 27-4 | Folder | 115 "Eaters of Dust" |
| | | 116 "Emperor Jones" |
| | | 117 "Freedom the Banner" |
| | | 118 "Garden of Time" |
| | | 119 "Guest in the House" |
| | | 120 "Hamlet" |
| | | 121 "Look Back in Anger" |
| | | 122 "Macbeth" |
| | | 123 "Mambas Daughter" |
| | | 124 "Media" |
| | | 125 "A Moon for the Misbegotten" |
| | | 126 "Morning, Noon, and Night" |
| | | 127 "My Hearts in the Highlands" |
| | | 128 "New World a Coming" |
| | | 129 "Noah" |
| | | 130 "Nude With Violin" |
| | | 131 "Oedipus Rex" |
| | | 132 "Pelleas and Melisande" |
| | | 133 "Powerful Long Ladder" |
| | | 134 "Purlie Victorious" |
| | | 135 "Pygmalion" |
| | | 136 "Rashomon" |
| | | 137 "The Reluctant Debutante" |
| | | 138 "The Return" |
| | | 139 "Simply Heavenly" |
| | | 140 "The Summer Fire" |
| | | 141 "Suppressed Desires" |
| | | 142 "Tea and Sympathy" |
| | | 143 "Thunder Rock" |
| | | 144 "Til Victory is Won" - News Release |
| | | 145 "Twilight Crane" and "Home" |
| | | 146 Reviews by Owen Dodson |

E Teaching Materials

Box 27-5

- 147 Production Seminar
- 148 Playwriting Class Manuscripts

F Programs

- 149 Programs - miscellaneous

I Howard University

- 167 Howard University Annual
Report of the Summer
School, 1951

J Theatre Workshops

- 168 Alabama A & M College
Writer's Conference
169 Atlanta University Summer
School of the Theatre
170 Hampton Institute Summer
Theatre Arts Festival
171 New York State Theatre
Festival

K Prints and Photographs

Box 27-7 Owen Dodson
Folder 172-176

Owen Dodson and Others
172-179

Lillian Evanti
180-211

Box 27-8 Lillian Evanti and Others
212-226

Photographs Individual -
Identified
227-241

Photographs Individual - Unidentified
242-243

Photographs - Group-- Identified
244-246

Photographs of Things
247-252

Prints
253-268

L Scrapbooks

Item 27-9 Scrapbook No. 1

Item 27-10

Scrapbook No. 2 (FRAGILE)

