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REVELLA HUGHES PAPERS
Collection 156-1 to 156-4

Prepared by:
Gregory Bargeman
March 1992

MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

Scope Note

Revella Hughes (1895-1987), jazz and classical pianist/organist, known professionally as Carmela Desche, was born in Huntington, West Virginia. At the height of her career, she performed in concert with famed musicians and vocalists such as Marian Anderson, Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson and Harry Burleigh. She also played leading roles in many touring productions, such as "Runnin Wild," and was choral director for the Broadway musical, "Shuffle Along." Revella Hughes donated her papers to MSRC from 1982 to 1985. The collection totals 1.5 linear feet.

The papers contain primarily printed material, consisting of programs and news clippings. Also included are phonograph recordings of her work, which have been duplicated onto cassettes for research use; and a scrapbook, which consists of correspondence from fans, clippings about her life and career, publicity fliers and programs.

Biographical Sketch

- 1895 July 27 Born in Huntington, West Virginia
- 1917 Received Bachelor of Music degree from Howard University
- 1920 Married Layton Wheaton, but ended marriage to travel with a road company
- 1921 First African-American to appear as featured soloist in the Mayor Hylan People Is Concert in New York's Central Park
- 1922 Choral director of Broadway production, "Shuffle Along;" leading lady in George White's production, "Runnin' Wild" Performed for the New York City Police Department Band banquet at the Hotel Astor
- 1932-42 Career on hold to care for sick mother in Huntington. Continued to work in the field as Supervisor of music for the city's colored schools
- 1943 Returned to the stage.
- 1953 Toured Europe and the Middle East with the Gypsy Markoff show which entertained at U.S. air bases
- 1961 Inherited approximately one-million dollars from a long-time friend, Evelyn Adams, heir to the Adams family chewing gum fortune.
- 1981 Brought out of retirement by the Universal Jazzy Coalition for the Women's Jazz Festival in New York
- 1984 Received Alumni Achievement Award from Howard University
- 1985 Received honorary degree in music from Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia
- 1987 Oct. 24 Died in New York City at the age of 92

Source: Revella Hughes Papers, MSRC, Box 156-1, Folder 3, "Biographical Sketches"

Series Description

- Series A**
Box 156-1
Personal Papers
Included in this series are diplomas, recognition awards, news clippings about the life and career of Revella Hughes. Also included is the register for the Revella Hughes Collection at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia.
- Series B**
Box 156-1
Correspondence
This series includes correspondence between Revella Hughes and her friends, business contacts and associates.
- Series C**
Box 156-1
Programs
This series contains programs of Revella Hughes' performances from 1927 through 1985, including Gypsy Markoff's "All Girls Revue."
- Series D**
Box 156-1
Scrapbook (Photocopy)
Photocopies only. Includes correspondence, publicity announcements, programs and newsclippings. The original disassembled scrapbook does not circulate (see Restricted Series).
- Series E**
Box 156-2
Photographs
This series consists of individual portraits and publicity shots of Revella Hughes. It also contains group photos, including high school and college classes, and award banquets.
- Series F**
Box 156-2
Recordings of Revella Hughes
Includes original phonograph recordings of Revella Hughes which have been duplicated onto reels as archival master reel tapes, and onto cassette tapes for research use. The original recordings do not circulate. Included are photocopies of the labels from the recordings.
- Series G**
Item 156-4
Restricted Item
Original scrapbook. This item is fragile. DO NOT CIRCULATE. A photocopy is available for research use.

Container List

Series A

Personal Papers

Box

Folder

156-1

- 1 Education, honors and awards
- 2 Inventory of Revella Hughes Papers at Marshall University
- 3 News clippings - biographical
- 4 News clippings - general, n.d - 1967

Series B

Correspondence

- 5 A- B
- 6 C- H
- 7 I- M
- 8 N- P
- 9 Q- R
- 10 S- Z

Series C

Programs

- 11 1927 - 1982
- 12 Gypsy Markoff's "All Girl Revue," 1953; correspondence and synopsis
- 13 1983 - 1985
- 14 No date

Series D

Scrapbook (Photocopy)

- 15 Correspondence
- 16 Publicity and programs
- 17 Publicity and programs
- 18 Newsclippings
- 19 Newsclippings
- 20 Newsclippings

Series E

Photographs

156-2

- 1 Revella Hughes, 1982
- 2 Oberlin High School, 1915
- 3 Oberlin student orchestra
- 4 Oberlin High class photo
- 5 Oberlin Musical Union

Container List

- Series E Photographs** continued
- Box Folder
- 156-2
- 6 Howard University Class photo
 - 7 Annual Luncheon, New York Police Department, 1922
 - 8 Revella Hughes with music class (Xerox only)
 - 9 Revella Hughes with unidentified group
 - 10 Publicity photo
 - 11 NAACP Awards Ceremony, 1958
 - 12 Revella Hughes' name on theater marquee, Oakland, California
 - 13 Page from unidentified yearbook
- Series F Recordings of Revella Hughes**
- 14 Photocopies of labels from phonograph recordings
 - 15 Musical transcriptions of spirituals
- Cassette Tapes
- Item
- 1 Freddie Martin's "Bumble Boogie" from "Flight of the Bumble Bee" (side 1)
Rachmaninov's "Prelude in C Minor" (side 2)
 - 2 "Capricious Bumble Bee", arranged by Camilla Desche (side 1)
"Brazil", arranged by Camilla Desche (side 2)
 - 3 "Danny Boy", arranged by Camilla Desche (side 1) "Rockin' with
Rachmaninov" arranged by Camille Desche (side 2)
 - 4 "At Dawning", arranged by Cadman (side 1) "Thank God for a Garden",
arranged by Del Riego (side 2)
 - 5 "With the Coming of Tomorrow", arranged by Creamer and Layton (side 1)
"Ah! Wondrous Morn", arranged by Creamer and Layton
- Restricted Recordings
- 156-3
- 1 Six original phonograph recordings of Revella Hughes (one is a
duplicate). These recordings DO NOT CIRCULATE Cassettes are available
for research use.
 - 2 Five archival master reels
- Series G Restricted Item**
- 156-4
- Original scrapbook. FRAGILE. DO NOT CIRCULATE.