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The Writers Club, Inc.

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SCOPE NOTE

The papers of The Writers Club, Inc. reflect the more than twenty-five year history of an organization of Washington, D.C. African American literati. Founded by a small group of five local writers, the club dedicated itself to "stimulating more creative writing among those who have had their writings accepted by periodicals or publishers of note." The collection was donated by J. Leon Langhorne in 1971. It is approximately 2.5 linear feet, and spans the years of 1941 to 1966.

The Writers Club, Inc. served a critical need in providing encouragement, support, and visibility to a group of talented and creative African Americans often ignored by mainstream publishers and other media. In addition, the organization presented to the public some of the finest African American writers and scholars of the day.

The core of the collection exists in two notebooks of minutes covering a twenty-year period. The minutes were recorded by two club secretaries, Alfred Nixon (1941-1948) and J. Leon Langhorne (1948-1961).

Discussions of their own writings, and discussions by invited guests enlivened both regular and public meetings. John Hope Franklin, J. Saunders Redding, Rayford Logan, Mae Miller Sullivan, Owen Dodson, E. Franklin Frazier, Georgia Douglas Johnson, and Montague Cobb were some of the more well-known participants.

Meetings were held in members' homes three times a year. Members were required to pay dues of \$.25 a meeting or \$.75 for the year. "Refreshments" served early on eventually became "delightful repasts," and then "elegant dinners." An important part of each meeting agenda required each member to report on works-in-progress or those about to be or recently published.

Potential members were scrutinized and voted on before being invited to join the club. Among some of those invited into membership were Inabel and Arnett Lindsay, and Dorothy and James Porter. Sterling A. Brown is also mentioned as a possible member, but there is no record of his attendance at any meeting in the minutes. An obvious bond among many of the members was their affiliation with Howard University.

Series Description

Series A Writers Club, Inc. Minutes (1941-1961)

Comprised of two notebooks of handwritten minutes. The first documents the founding of the club through minutes of its first thirteen years of existence, 1941-1954.

The early members, growth and evolution of the group are detailed here. Provides a detailed account of

members' writing and publishing activities. The second notebook contains minutes of the organization for the next six years, 1955-1961, and continues to document organizational activities, club projects, and members' publishing efforts.

Series B Writers Club Documents

Includes membership materials; club correspondence; incorporation papers; invitations; and newsclippings. General membership materials are included here.

Container List

A Writers Club Minutes

Box Folder

- 201-I 1 One notebook containing 1941-1954 minutes names the five founding members, initial inductees, and organizational and programmatic information.
- 2 A second notebook of minutes, 1955-1961, continues documentation of the organizational activities, proposed projects, and members' publishing efforts.

B Writers Club Documents

3 Membership Materials

4 Correspondence
Daly, Victor R., to members of the Writers Club,
Inc., 1966

Langhorne, J. L., February 1952 and March 1952
Redding, J. Saunders, 1952
Spingarn, Arthur B., 1947

- 5 Incorporation Papers
- 6 Invitations
- 7 Newsclippings