Carl Van Vechten was an author, fine arts critic, photographer, bibliophile, and philanthropist. The Carl Van Vechten Collection, measuring 2 1/2 linear feet, was donated by Mr. Van Vechten in 1946. This collection spans from the 1920s to the
mid 1950s, with most items from the 1940s.

The collection consists primarily of catalogs, programs, announcements, and invitations which serve to document Afro-American participation in the arts: visual art, photography, dance, drama, literature, and music.

Noted visual artists documented in the collection include Richard Barth & Romare Bearden, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence and Hale Woodruff. Among the dancers are Josephine Baker, Janet Collins, Katherine Dunham, and Moncion Francisco. The drama series includes numerous programs of Afro-American production companies such as the Washington Repertory Players, American Negro Theatre, Rose McClendon Players, Krigwa Players, Gilpin Players, Karamu House, Howard University Players, and Dillard University Players Guild. Music, the largest series in the collection, features artists from opera and classical music to spirituals, jazz and blues. There is a small amount of material in Collection about writers, of which Langston Hughes predominates. Also there is a small number of programs and flyers from testimonial dinners, awards ceremonies, anniversary benefits, and dedication programs.

In addition to this collection of programs, Carl Van Vechten donated to Moorland-Spingarn "The Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes". This collection of photographs by Carl Van Vechten is indexed and available for
Biographical Data

Carl Van Vechten

1880 June 17 Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
1899-1903 Attended the University of Chicago, majoring in English.
1903-1905 Worked for Chicago American newspaper.
1906 Worked as assistant music critic for the New York Times newspaper.
1907 Married Anna Elizabeth Snyder; took first trip to Europe.
1910 Contributed music biographies to Century Dictionary.
1912 Divorced Anna Elizabeth Snyder Van Vechten.
1913 Worked as drama critic for the New
York Press newspaper.

1914 Married actress Fania Marinoff; took second trip to Europe.

1914-1932 Worked as independent writer and novelist.

1932 Began serious work in photography.

1935 Mounted first photographic show.

1941 Founded Carl Van Vechten Collection of books and manuscripts in New York Public Library and also the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of Negro Arts and Letters at Yale University Library.

1942-1945 Served in the American Theatre Wing during World War II.

1944 Founded George Gershwin Memorial Collection of Music and Musical Literature at Fisk University Library.

1946 Founded Rose McClendon Memorial Collection of Photographs of Celebrated Negroes at Howard University Library. (Currently housed in the Prints and Photographs Department Moorland-Spingarn Research Center.

1947 Founded Anna Marble Pollock Memorial Library of Books about Cats at Yale University Library.

1949 Founded 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 New Mexico.

1955 Honored on his seventy-fifth birthday
by exhibitions at Yale University and at New York Public Library.

Received honorary Ph.D. from Fisk University.

Fragments from an unwritten autobiography published by Yale.


1960  Honored on his eightieth birthday by exhibitions at Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) and at University of Pittsburgh.

Honored as a chief benefactor by New York Library

1961  Became a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

*1964  Died in New York City.

*1966 June 17  Ashes scattered in Shakespeare Garden, Central Park.

Sources: Carl Van Vechten by Edward Lueders
*Carl Van Vechten and the Irreverent Years by Brice Kellner

Series Description

Series A  Art

Box 142-1  This series includes programs, announcements, invitations, catalogs, and articles related to photographs, sculpture, and painting exhibits highlighting Afro-American artists. Among the artists represented are
Richmond Barthe, Romare Bearden, Lois Mailou Jones, Jacob Lawrence and Horace Pippin. Items are filed by artist, gallery, or exhibit title.

Series B Dance

Box 142-1 This series includes programs, announcements and invitations related to dance performances of Afro-American individuals and groups. Some of the artists represented are Janet Collins, Francisco Moncion, Katherine Dunham, and Asadata Dafora's African Dancers. Items are filed by performer, group or production title.

Series C Drama

Box 142-2 This series includes playbills, announcements, and invitation related to the Afro-American in drama. There are souvenir programs from "Carmen Jones" and "Porgy and Bess", and synopses of the screenplays "Home of the Brave" and "The Well". These items include integrated and all Afro-American productions filed by performer, company, or production title.

Series D Motion Picture

Box 142-2 This series contains only one item; an announcement for the motion picture "We've Come A Long, Long Way", a 1944 documentary film on the progress of the Afro-American race.

Series E Music

Box 142-3 to 142-4 This series includes programs, announcements, and invitations related to Afro-American performances of the different styles of music: classical, jazz, folk/blues, spirituals, and popular. Some of the artists represented are Carol Brice, Louis Armstrong, Billy Holiday, Dorothy Maynor, and Murial Rahn. Items are filed by performer, group or pro-
Series F  Opera

Box 142-5  This series contains one announcement and five programs related to Afro-American performances of opera. One of the programs, a 1944 benefit concert for the National Negro Opera Co. at Carnegie Hall, contains notes on performers.

Series G  Writers

Box 142-5  This series contains invitations, programs, announcements, and writings related to eight writers. Among the writers are Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, and Countee Cullen. There is also a poem for Carl Van Vechten by George S. Schuyler entitled A Farewell To Carlo.

Series H  Events

Box 142-5  This series contains announcements and programs related to benefits, anniversaries, and tributes in which Afro-Americans appeared or were honored. One of the items in the seating list for a dinner given Feb. 23, 1948, honoring W.E.B. DuBois' 80th birthday. Items are filed by the title of the event.

Series I  Sketches

Box 142-5  This series contains three unidentified, unsigned pencil sketches.

Container List

A  Art

Box  Folder

142-1  1  Afro-Arts Bazaar
       2  Archer, Edmund
The Art of the American Negro (1851-1940)  
Barnett Aden Gallery  
Barthe', Richmond  
Bearden, Romare  
Brall, Ruth  
Brooks, Howard  
Brown, Samuel J.  
Clark, Claude  
Countee Cullen Memorial Collection  
Haitian  
Hayden, Palmer  
Hyppolite, Hector  
Howard University  
Jones, Lois Mailou  
Lawrence, Jacob  
Malebranche Andree  
The Negro's Contribution to American Culture  
The Philadelphia Society for Negro Records and Research  
Pippin, Horace  
Portinari, Candido  
Priebe  
Rivers, Haywood  
Scurlock, Robert S.  
Sebree, Charles  
South Side Community Art Center (Chicago)  
Three Negro Artists  
Van Vechten, Carl  
Wilson, Ellis  
Woodruff, Hale

B Dance

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<tr>
<td>142-1</td>
<td>32 Baker, Josephine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>33 Beatty, Talley</td>
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<td></td>
<td>34 Belle Rosette &amp; Group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35 Bruce, Mary</td>
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<td>36 Coleman, Leo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>37 Coles &amp; Atkins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38 Collins, Janet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>39 Dafora, Asadata</td>
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<td>40 Destine, Jean Leon</td>
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</table>
Dunham, Katherine
"An Evening In The Tropics"

Freeman, Mabel Jones

Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group

Kitchell, Iva

Marchant, Claude

Maudelle

Moncion, Francisco

Murray, Eddie

Primus, Pearl

St. Denis, Ruth

142-2  C Drama

1  The American Negro Theatre
2  American Negro Repertory Players
3  The (Atlanta) University Players
4  Bailey, Pearl
5  "The Bourbons Got The Blues"
6  Burke, Georgia
7  "Call Me Mister"
8  "Carmen Jones"
9  "Caukey"
10  "Claudia"
11  "Danger Corner"
12  Dillard University Players Guild
13  Frederick Douglass Players of Solidarity Lodge 691
14  "Freedom's Birthplace"
15  "The Fruits of Freedom"
16  "Garden of Time"
17  "The Glass Menagerie"
18  Gilbert, Mercedes
19  "Hansel and Gretel"

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C Drama

Box  Folder

142-2  20  "Four Episodes in the Life of Harriet Tubman"

21  George, Zelma

22  The Gilpin Players of the Karama House

23  Hampton Institute Summer School

24  Harlem Experimental Theatre

25  "Heroines in Bronze"
26 "Home of the Brave"
27 Howard University Players
28 "Inside U.S.A."
29 "Jeb"
30 Jones, Robert Earl
31 Karau House
32 Kellam, Corky
33 "King Solomon's Mines"
34 "Kiss Me Kate"
35 Krigwa Players
36 "A Lady Passing Fair"
37 Lee, Canada
33 Little Theatre Tournament
39 "A Long Way Home"
40 "The Midwoman of Chaillot"
41 Marriott, John
42 "The Medium"
43 The Negro Drama Group
44 The Negro Unity Theatre
45 "Old White Joe"
46 "Othello"
47 "Ouanga"
48 "Outward Bound"
49 The People's Theatre
50 "Porgy and Bess"
51 "The Power of Darkness"
52 The Rose McClendon Players
53 "St. Louis Woman"
54 "Show Boat"
55 "Skits Galore"
56 "Tales of Manhattan"
57 "Volpone"
58 The Washington Repertory Players
59 "The Well"
60 The Wilberforce Players
61 "Yes, M'Lord"
62 "A Young American"

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--------------                             D  Motion Picture

Box      Folder
142-2     63 "We've Come A Long, Long Way"

E  Music

142-3     1 Anderson, Gareth
2 Anderson, Marian
3 The Apollo Theatre
4 Armstrong, Louis
5       Banks,   Violet
6      Berksteiner, Constance
7      Brown,   Edith
8      Brice,   Carol
9      Burke,   Florine
10    Carnan, Matthew
11    Childress, Gladys E.
12    Chinn, Genevieve
13    Cole, Nat "King"
14    Cole, Joseph
15    Conaway, Wm. Alex.
16    Crawford, May
17    Cosme, Eusebia
18    D'Albert, Marc
19    Davis, Arthur
20    Davis, Ellabelle
21    Davis, Meta
22   de Paur's Infantry Chorus
23   Dixon, Dean
24   Dunbar, Rudolph
25   Duncan, Todd
26   Ellington, Duke
27   Evanti, Lillian
28  An Evening of Negro Music and Literature
29   Francis, Beatrice
30   Franzel, Carlotta
31   Griffin, Oscar
32   Hogan, Helen
33   Handy, W.C.
34   Hampton, Lionel
35   Hawthorne, Louise
36   Hayes, Roland
37   Hayman, Coreania
38   Heywood, Eddie
39   Holiday, Billy

E Music

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<td>142-3</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Holman, Libby</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Homer Smith's Melodaires</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Hopkins, Olyve P.</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Howard University Choir</td>
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<td>The Imma Sumack Trio</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>James, Joseph</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Jarboro, Caterina</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Jessye, Eva</td>
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</table>
48   Jock's Music Room
49   Johnson, "Bunk"
50   Johnson, Hall
51   Johnson, James P.
52   Jordan, Lois

142-4   1    Kaufman, Louis
         2    Kay, Ulysses
         3    Ledbetter, Huddie "Lead Belly"
         4    Lee, Alyme Dumas
         5    Lee, Everett
         6    Lewis, Nana
         7    The Library of Congress - A Festival of Music
         8    Lipscomb, Joseph
         9    Lockett, Joseph
        10    Love, Hortense
        11    Lovelace, Henrietta
        12    McFarlan, Ruth
        13    McFerrin, Robert
        14    McGhee, Novella
        15    Mais, Monica
        16    Matthews, Inez and Edwards
        17    Maynor, Dorothy
        18    Miles, Clara
        19    Millinder, Lucky
        20    The Negro Publication Society of America
        21    Norvo, Red
        22    Osbourne, Ada
        23    Pankey, Aubrey
        24    People's Songs, Inc.
        25    Percival, Pearl
        26    Philadelphia Conservatory of Music
        27    Phillips, Myrtle Gauntlett

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E  Music (cont'd)

Box   Folder
142-4

28    Pobers, Tatina
29    Rahn, Muriel
30    Reckling, Frances Kraft
31    Robeson, Paul
32    Rowland, Jeannie
33    "A Salute To Thomas (Fats) Walter"
34    Savage, Roena
35    Saxon, Luther
36 Schuyler, Philippa Duke
37 Scott, Hazel
38 Sheppard, Carmen
39 Smith, Bessie
40 Smith, Muriel
41 Smith, Paul A.
42 Song Festival and Quartet Contest
43 Snow, Valaida
44 The Southenaires
45 Stern, Arthur
46 Still, William Grant
47 Stone, Theodore Charles
48 Swanson, Howard
49 Taylor, Jeannette
50 Taylor, Johnnie (52nd St.)
51 Thigpen, Helen
52 Thomas, A. Jack
53 Thompson, Wallace
54 Towles, Lois
55 Tyler, Edward Lee
56 Van Renssellear, Maybelle
57 Veasy, William
58 Voorhees, Bettye
59 Walker, George
60 Waters, Ethel
61 Watson, Naomi
62 Watts, Leontyne C.
63 Wendell, Bruce
64 Wesley, Charlotte
65 White, Clarence Cameron
66 White, Josh
67 White, Portia
68 Williams, Camilla
69 Winters, Lawrence
70 Wise, Ethyl
71 "World's Fair of Music"

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F Opera

Box  Folder

142-5  1  "Aida"
2  "Four Saints In Three Acts"
3 "The Medium"
4 The National Negro Opera Company
5 Opera Night ... Ornstein School of Music
6 "Troubled Island"
G Writers

7 Brown, Sterling
8 Cullen, Countee
9 Hughes, Langston
10 Johnson, James Weldon
11 Locke, Alain
12 Petry, Ann
13 Robeson, Eslanda Cardoza Goode
14 Schuyler, George S.

H Events

15 American Birobidja Committee - Benefit Program
16 The Associated Blind, Inc. - Tenth Anniversary
17 Bunche, Ralph J. - Dinner Tribute
18 DuBois, W.E.B. - 80th Birthday Tribute
19 Keeping Fit for the American Way of Life (Washington D.C. Public Schools)
20 Georgetown Day School Annual Christmas Party
21 Haiti Week of New York
22 I Am An American Day
23 National Council of Negro Women - 1944 Honor Roll
24 The National Urban League - "Salute to Freedom"
25 Page, J.E. (Miss)
26 Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, Indianapolis 20th Annual Dinner
27 Southwest Harlem Neighborhood Council, Inc.
28 Joel E. Spingarn High School Dedication

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H Events (cont'd)

Box   Folder

142-5   29 Spotlight on Spain Dinner
30 Town Hall Spanish Recital
31 Major James E. Walker Memorial Field Dedication
32 Dr. Daniel Hale Williams Memorial Concert
I Sketches

33 Unidentified Sketches

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